

**"SUITABLE " FOR NEW ZEALAND: THE IMPACT OF
INTER-WAR MIGRATION ON AN EMERGENT
NATIONALISM, 1919-39.**

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A group of young British migrants aboard the "Suffolk", 1923. Photo courtesy of Alec Mathison.

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Abbreviations

A.J.C.P.	Australian Joint Copying Project
A.J.H.R.	Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives
I.F.P.S.	Imperial Free Passage Scheme
N.Z.J.H.	New Zealand Journal of History
N.Z.O.Y.	New Zealand Official Yearbook
N.Z.P.D.	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
O.S.B.	The Overseas Settlement Board, London
R.E.C.	The Refugees Emergency Committee
R.S.A.	New Zealand Returned Soldier's Association
S.O.S.B.W.	The Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women
W.D.F.U.	Women's Division of the Farmer's Union

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Abstract

This thesis considers aspects of both the formal and informal perspectives of immigration to New Zealand, looking at legislation and the attitudes and the messages created and sent within a society about migration and their implications for national identity, a perpetually evolving concept. It proceeds from the premise that the notion of protection embodied in nationalism conceivably involved a reluctance to allow immigration in large numbers for fear that it would endanger employment and living standards, and a concern that the 'racial purity' of the majority population would be impaired.

The main body is divided into sections, which indicate a racial division (between those who could be considered "white" English-speaking Europeans, and those who could not), and also two contrasting viewpoints. Section One presents a study of both the policy and practise of British immigration in the interwar period. How New Zealand citizens saw their country's role within the international situation was as important as the perceived skills of individual migrants. These chapters identify the three main types of immigrant considered suitable, and their adaption to the New Zealand environment.

Migrants were all different but they were shaped equally by the need to frame New Zealand's cultural identity. For the purposes of Section Two the focal point is on those migrants who were conceptually viewed as unsuitable. It addresses the process by which "aliens" were defined, and unwillingness of policy-makers to actively help "aliens" to become assimilated. The implications of a preconceived idea of The Other are also examined. Ultimately it concludes that the process of alien immigrant selection on a case by case basis failed to appreciate the changing dynamics of the international situation. While the restrictive policies of the 1930s reflected economic concerns, their very rigidity could not guarantee the "suitability" of immigrants.

Introduction

The resurgence of popular concern about Asian immigration and immigration policy in general, on and around the 1996 general election, has highlighted an interesting paradox. While New Zealand is underpopulated by international standards with regard to its resources, it has had relatively low immigration levels. A recent article in the lifestyle magazine *Metro*, discussed the resentment, alienation and fearfulness felt by a proportion of the New Zealand population who could not comprehend the viewpoint of the more outward focused "Asia - friendly" residents.¹ The article found that the main arguments against Asian immigration - the perception of an "invasion" and of a threat to New Zealand jobs, are false.² In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that recent immigrations have contributed to unemployment as employment levels have remained at roughly the same level.³ In the years 1990-1996 migrants from Asia have made up 40 percent of the total.⁴ Their effect on the economy has been encouraging, as they have introduced new skills and technologies. Similarly, a report commissioned by the Business Round Table in 1990 suggests, admittedly somewhat vaguely, that "immigration in a competitive economy increases output and improves productivity."⁵ Why then has this reticence regarding immigration prevailed?

In Malcolm McKinnon's book on the historical assessment of immigration policy, he identifies a gap in previous works. McKinnon argues that "the broader pattern of who was and who was not, who could and who could not,

¹ V. Heeringa, "The European Invasion," *Metro*, June 1996, , no.180, pp.55-61. Anti Asian attitudes are prevalent in New Zealand society. I work part-time in a fruit shop where a large number of the clientele are visibly and audibly "foreign", and very frequently I have hit against the comment made by one "white" English-speaking customer - "They should be made to speak English."

² Ibid., p.60-61.

³ "The Treaty of Waitangi and Immigration Policy," A Joint Methodist/Presbyterian Public Questions Committee Occasional Paper, May 1994, pp.4-5.

⁴ Heeringa, p.58. Britons and Australians were by far the largest national groups.

⁵ See "The Treaty..", p.3.

be a member of the New Zealand community" has not been adequately dealt with.⁶ Central to immigration in the interwar years is the interaction of immigration with New Zealand nationalism in the setting provided by the aftermath of the war and the onset of the depression. At this time the population was 75-80 percent New Zealand-born.⁷ This provided a base for an emerging Pakeha nationalism, which had a strong British component, and as such this nationalism shaped, and was shaped by, the immigration debate. There are a number of things to be learned from a study of responses to immigration. New Zealand citizens' lack of contact with culturally diverse peoples is itself indicative of the impact of immigration. The intention of this work is to study immigration and the reactions to it, as a window for the emergence of nationalism. My brief is to look at the attitudes and the messages created and sent within a society about migration and their implications for national identity, a perpetually evolving concept.

The nation is "notoriously difficult" to define, involving the perceptions of a political community of its own state.⁸ Official nationalism is more readily accessible; Benedict Anderson has described it as "an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or exclusion from an emerging nationally-imagined community".⁹ This notion of protection might conceivably involve a reluctance to allow immigration in large numbers for fear that it would endanger employment and living standards, or a concern that the 'racial purity' of the majority population would be impaired. While there are other relevant factors in defining nationalism, the justification and reasoning for the reluctance to absorb immigrants in New Zealand involved a group identification against a common enemy, physical or

⁶ M. McKinnon, Immigrants and Citizens. New Zealanders and Asian Immigration in Historical Context, (Wellington, Institute of Policy studies, 1996), pp.2

⁷ Census of New Zealand, 1921 and 1936. See birthplaces.-statistical tables.

⁸ B. Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (revised edn), (London, Verso. 1991), pp.3-7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.101.

ideological.¹⁰ The protection of "New Zealand values" and "the New Zealand way of life" involved a formulation of nationalism, and in this way, the issues of migration and nationalism interacted. This produced not only hostility to Asian migration of such long-standing, but also a tendency towards single-source migration. This is captured in the comment of the under-secretary for immigration in 1921; "Because of the fact that New Zealand is situated at such a great distance from the base whence our supply of immigrants is drawn, it is essential that none but the best quality be dispatched to our shores".¹¹ This nationalism can also be seen in other places. For example, economic historian Paul Bartrop observes that in post World War One Australia, focus was placed on self-preservation and a distrust developed of things foreign.¹²

The paradox presented by low population and low immigration numbers resolved itself to a certain degree by its interaction with nationalism. From the whalers and traders onwards, "white", essentially British migrants have prided themselves on the common possession of a 'pioneering spirit', and have sought to impose a "white" political infrastructure upon the New Zealand landscape. In New Zealand's case while most of its permanent settlers were British citizens and probably came from the United Kingdom, most early settlers came via Australia, until the end of World War One when settlers came directly from the British Isles. New Zealand is without argument, a geographically small country, and the numbers of immigrants arriving in the interwar period were relatively small. In consequence the people who did come into the country are disproportionately important for the potential impact they could have. For example, it was not until 1925 that the country had a New Zealand-born Prime Minister. Furthermore the most influential people in the reshaping of the Labour party which was to win office in 1935 were three immigrants; Harry

¹⁰ K. Sinclair, A Destiny Apart. New Zealand's Search for National Identity, (Wellington, Allen and Unwin N. Z. Ltd., 1986), pp.3-5.

¹¹ Annual Report of the Department of Immigration, A. J. H. R., D-9, 1921, p.1.

¹² P. Bartrop, "Indifference and Inconvenience: Australian government policy towards refugees from Nazi persecution, 1933-39," Ph.D. (Economic History), Monash University, 1989, p.13.

Holland got his start in the Sydney labour movement, the first Labour Prime Minister was Australian, while Walter Nash and Peter Fraser were from England and Scotland respectively.¹³ Fundamentally then, the course that the direction of immigration was to follow in the twenties and thirties had the capacity to define the nation that New Zealand was becoming, not only in terms of population numbers, but also with regard to an impact on ideology. Was it to be a "respectable" dominion populated by suitable British migrants, a "worker's paradise" for ideologues, or something else? Essentially then, the New Zealand society was constantly being remade, both by the constraints put on immigration and immigrants by the incumbent society, and by the expectations of the settlers. Immigration was the subject of serious review and discussion in the interwar period, and as such it was an issue which helped to make the nation.

While Keith Sinclair has argued in his book *A Destiny Apart. New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, that nationalism has operated in New Zealand in some form or another since the latter stages of the nineteenth century,¹⁴ its cohesiveness in the earliest decades of the twentieth century remains under dispute.¹⁵ Arguably the arousal of nationalism occurred in the earliest stages of the twentieth century. Richard Jebb, a British imperialist, visited most of the larger British colonies between 1898 and 1901, and had this to say about the New Zealand animal:

. . . the conduct of the New Zealand contingents (in the Boer War), described by their own war correspondents, had awakened the latent sense of a separate and indigenous patriotism. Suddenly the people of the colony had seized the idea that they were indeed an island race apart, to their future glory rather than to their present misfortune; no longer "Britons of the South," nor Australasians, but Maorilanders first. In those thrilling days scant respect would have been paid to the suggestion that the most vigorous national individuality of the southern hemisphere should forego its

¹³ L. Richardson, "Parties and Political Change", in G. Rice (ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, (2nd edn), (Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1992), p.222.

¹⁴ Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*, pp.33-45.

¹⁵ K. Sinclair, "The beginnings of a colonial nationalism: Richard Jebb in New Zealand, 1899," in J. Eddy and D. Schreuder (eds), *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa first assert their nationalities, 1880-1914*, (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1988), p.127.

splendid prospect of independent evolution. Nevertheless the nationalism of New Zealand is recent and immature. Mr Seddon, for example, still speaks of his country as "the Colony," and plunges headlong into the pitfalls of anti-national imperialism, as when he led the movement for dictating the labour policy of the new South African colonies, which the Canadian statesmen were careful to avoid.¹⁶

While nationalism of a youthful and inexperienced sort existed from the turn of the century, commentators might reasonably ask why it is that the interwar period is notable. This question can be answered with respect to the state of flux that the society experienced at that time. Economically, politically and socially, the twenties and thirties were a difficult time for New Zealand. Sandwiched between two wars, and marked by economic depression and political change, the two decades can be seen as an exercise in "rising to the occasion." World War One had placed New Zealand in a novel situation. Not only did the experience of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces stimulate powerful national feeling and widen their experiences,¹⁷ but it also created a huge displacement of manpower for which some solution was needed. New Zealand sent over ten percent of the Dominion's mean population in 1914, to war, which meant that for the first time women were recruited in large numbers for work in the industries, and in business.¹⁸ In addition the period is important for the setting of two separate New Zealand and British agenda. World War One had broken the sea communications with Britain, and economic crises had their impact, as many countries, New Zealand among them, retreated into what Eric Hobsbawm describes as 'national economy'.¹⁹ New Zealand's light manufacturing industries leaned towards protectionism, and opposed the competition of British imports, so that the period highlights a clear separation of British and New Zealand interests.

¹⁶ R. Jebb, Studies in Colonial Nationalism, (London, Edward Arnold, 1905), pp.92-93.

¹⁷ Sinclair, A Destiny Apart, pp.156-173.

¹⁸ New Zealand Official Year Book, 1920, p.84. (Hereafter as N. Z. O. Y.)

¹⁹ E. J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, myth, reality, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.132.

However, returning to our main point: arguably, the paradox that is New Zealand immigration policy - the conjunction of low immigration and low resource use - can be explained by the role of nationalism. None of this is to say that the interaction of nationalism and immigration in this period was without its problems. Firstly there were major social divisions that shaped the immigration debate and provided distinctive components of a nationalist ideology. One of the central themes of this thesis is that public reaction did not always support the actions of government, nor was the opinion of individuals uniform - support or contempt for increased immigration was affected by a person's social and economic standing, political interests and occupation. Conservative voices can be seen in the *Christchurch Press*, while the voice of Labour was expressed in public records like the *Maoriland Worker* and the Returned Soldier's Association's *Quick March*.. Chapter one explores the impact of economic change/crisis on New Zealand's immigration policy and on attitudes to immigration. It also considers the effect of a pre-existing set of beliefs about the impact of immigration on employment.

Furthermore, the interaction of an English-based nationalism and of immigration was complicated by the situation of minority tauwiwi populations within New Zealand society who were isolated by language, culture or association. The tangata whenua had their own identity and Pakeha nationalism posed problems for it. This was implicitly recognised in the incorporation of Maori into New Zealand nationalism in a symbolic and decorative manner, for example the use of the term "Maorilander" to describe New Zealand troops in World War One, and in the preoccupation among Pakeha individuals, with "ethnography", anthropology and demography.²⁰ Maori's statistical changes and population numbers were measured separately, as were the Censuses. Immigration numbers based on distinctions of race

²⁰Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*, p.168; J. Stenhouse, "Newman, Alfred," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 1901-1920*, Vol. III, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1996), pp.358-59.

became a preoccupation for governmental censuses. Much time was spent examining the racial pedigree of non-European migrants and estimating the numbers of 'half - blooded' and 'full-blooded' individuals.²¹ The distinction was also drawn between Europeanised Maori who were considered progressive and civilised and those living as Maori.

Demographically Maori were holding their own; Maori population rates were high due to the impact of cultural factors on pronatalism.²² Maori society favoured early, almost universal marriage with little use of abortion or birth control methods.²³ In our period there were four Maori M. P.s, in keeping with the need for representation of this sector of the New Zealand community.²⁴ Like Pakeha citizens, Maori males shifted away from employment in the rural primary sector into the secondary between 1926 and 1936, a trend explained by the impact of the Depression on casual rural labour.²⁵ However there were great distinctions between Maori and Pakeha. Until 1945 three-quarters of the Maori population was still rural.²⁶ Maori were particularly susceptible to a variety of diseases and epidemics, particularly those affected by social conditions like housing, hygiene and nutrition.²⁷ These were all areas where they were behind the Dominion's "white" settlers. During the depression the Maori people were not eligible for Government assistance in terms of social support, in contravention of Article three of the Treaty of Waitangi which had guaranteed them all the rights and privileges of British citizens.

The value of the local "print-language", that is the vernacular, in spreading community information should not be underestimated.²⁸ The nation is created by a bond of language rather than the accident of birth; individuals could be

²¹ I. Pool, *Te Iwi Maori. A New Zealand Population Past Present and Projected*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1991), p.106.

²² Pool, pp.105, 109-11.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.111.

²⁴ See the provisions of the *Maori Representation Act 1867*, 31 Victoriae, no.47.

²⁵ Pool, p.121.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.123.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.120.

²⁸ See Anderson, pp.67-82.

invited into what Benedict Anderson calls "the imagined community", that is, the nation.²⁹ This very relevant to Maori marginalisation in the education system. In the interwar period Maori children were not educated in public schools, but in "native" schools. Moreover only small numbers were educated at all. In 1878 only 4 percent of Maori received education of some sort, while by 1928, twenty-three percent of the Maori population were being schooled.³⁰ In the case of language, teaching in English began in 1886, but the full European syllabus was not fully adopted until 1928.³¹ When Maori children left school, there were very few positions for them in so-called ordinary occupations.³² The slow integration of all Maori in the education system had a role in weakening the grasp and the extent of New Zealand nationalism because it denied a sector of the community the opportunity to interact on a common level.

Finally, the impact of nationalism on immigration was diffused by the specific situation of Maori, the tangata whenua. Arguably common ground should have been laid in 1840 when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, but from the start the matter was veiled in confusion. The English version ceded to the British government the sovereignty of the territory and the sole right of pre-emption should Maori wish to sell their land. The Maori chiefs who signed were guaranteed full rights of ownership of their lands and other possessions, and the rights of royal protection and full British citizenship. However their text failed to convey the same meaning as the English version.³³ The guarantee of "te tino rangatiratanga" (chieftainship) entailed far more than the "possession" used in the English text, for it was an abstract term that implied

²⁹ Ibid., p.145.

³⁰ I.L.G. Sutherland, (ed) The Maori People Today. A General Survey. (The New Zealand Institute of International Affairs and the New Zealand Council For Educational Research, 1940), Taken from table on p.274.

³¹ Ibid., p.275, 416-17.

³² Batterbee's comments in Batterbee, High Commissioner for U. K., Wellington, to Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 27 October 1939 in A. J. C. P. 5398: 598, G262/1-3, New Zealand policy towards the Maoris.

³³ See C. Orange, The Treaty of Waitangi, (Wellington, Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1987).

that Maori's sovereign rights were actually being affirmed.³⁴ In 1877 Chief Justice Prendergast declared the Treaty a "simple nullity", the Treaty was considered to have no legal status in domestic law until 1975. The effect on the Maori people was to be ongoing.

One of the most common ideologies associated with dealing with different races was assimilation, whereby through "a process of generalisation," indigenous peoples would, it was assumed, be incorporated into ""existing" (white) frameworks of thought and action."³⁵ Such a philosophy assumed that indigenous peoples, like the Maori and the Aborigine would abandon their culture and convert to the white mode of thinking and way of life as soon as possible, and thereby a national identity would be created. With such an existing presupposition there is little wonder that Maori failed to live up to "British" requirements. Contact with the new culture through intermarriage socialisation helped to erode Maori culture and society, as did the spread of European diseases, and the alienation of Maori land.

However the Treaty was still a living document for Maori. Sir Apirana Ngata made this point apparent in the presence of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, by commenting that;

he (Ngata) knew where money was being wasted under the administration of the Native Department, but that as it was pakeha money it did not matter so much. The pakeha, he said, by taking credit for all the expenditure on the Maoris, gave the impression that it was pakeha money which was being spent as a gesture or a gratuity beyond the deserts of the Maori people. If the Maori were only receiving what he was entitled to - and New Zealand was now only making up to the Maori people their rightful dues of a century - the pakeha should not "crow" so much about it.³⁶

Furthermore, within the claims of assimilation and equality, Ngata was very aware of the existence of a double standard;

³⁴Ibid., pp.40-41.

³⁵ C. M. Tatz, Four Kinds of Dominion. Comparative Race Politics in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, (Public Lecture, Armidale, N. S. W., 17 July 1972), p.5.

³⁶ Batterbee to Eden, 27 October 1939, in A. J. C. P. 5398: 598, G262/1-3, New Zealand policy towards the Maoris.

... This is the difficulty so far as the Pakeha is concerned, the difference is the standard of living. It is a good thing the Maori has not been civilised to the extent that he had to complain about living conditions during the time of stress...³⁷

Ngata questioned the motives and the interests of the United government, by considering that commonly held and carefully nurtured belief that the white Europeans would deliver the Maori people from savagery to civilisation. This paternalistic approach while condescending in attitude, served to elevate the value of Western culture and created a dichotomy which separated rather than united. The dichotomy tended to dissolve differences amongst Pakeha or even amongst Maori, in focusing on the colonial nature of the relationship - colonisers versus the colonised.³⁸ In this sense Maori, and any other group who were not Pakeha, became the "negative opposite", The Other.³⁹ The term entails more than a geographical meaning, because the retroactive focus serves a generalising function - to define and unify the in-group, Pakeha.⁴⁰ Having defined the Other as dependents, or as barbarians, and therefore as lesser, the condition of being Pakeha is itself redefined from its initial perspective.⁴¹ In this sense, the function of Maori as The Other served to define Pakeha nationalism, and caused Maori to internalise the racial theory that this entailed.

Journalist Felix Keesing argued in 1928 that colour discrimination was an 'increasing phenomenon', as Pakeha influences pervaded not only schools, but also the State, the Church, and employment and leisure activities.⁴² As late as 1937 the Inspector of Native schools, J. H. Pope commented on the persistent phenomenon of Maori failing to integrate to "white" standards;

³⁷ The Lyttleton Times, July 19, 1929, p.8.

³⁸P. Spoonley, "Constructing Ourselves: The Post-colonial Politics of Pakeha," in M. Wilson and A. Yeatman (eds) Justice and Identity. Antipodean Practises, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books Ltd., 1995), pp.98-99.

³⁹R. Mohanram, "The Postcolonial Critic: Third-World (Con)Texts/ First-World Contexts", in *ibid.*, p.180.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, pp.181, 189.

⁴¹A. Yeatman "Justice and the Sovereign Self", in Justice and Identity, p.202.

⁴² F.M. Keesing, The Changing Maori, (New Plymouth, Thomas Avery and Sons Ltd., 1928), p.163.

The Maori has not yet found his proper place in the larger community. He is socially maladjusted, as is shown by his lower standard of living, by his improvidence, and by a comparison of his high birth and death rates compared with those of the European community.⁴³

While the observation demonstrates the disadvantages which in Maori found themselves, the failing lay in the perception of "white" New Zealanders to accept blame for the development of perceptible negative Maori activities and characteristics as a result of "white" intervention.⁴⁴ The existing political structure continued to define Maori by British definitions. At times this was a useful device. For example, Maori lands could be identified as independent economic bodies capable of supporting itself, and therefore justify government inaction on Maori social issues;

As the Maori race owns more than 4,500,000 acres of land, the Unemployment Board naturally feels that it ought not to be necessary to spend £166,000 a year in maintaining Maori unemployed.⁴⁵

Ethnocentrism legitimised not only the colonising majority but provided a plethora of domestic problems and issues for Maori leaders to deal with, and in doing so, distracted Maori from making contributions in other areas of political debate, for example immigration. Not only the government believed that their actions with regard to Maori were just and morally correct; the view was held by 'experts' like anthropologist Raymond Firth;

In New Zealand the social position of the Maori is so good that the offspring of mixed marriages tend on the whole to retain and stress their connection with the Maori group rather than to seek complete absorption in the European group, which is legally and socially quite possible.⁴⁶

Interestingly, a good social position did not involve equality of treatment with the dominant white culture, and while equality was claimed it was often couched in terms of racial stereotypes and ratings, where Maori were "the

⁴³ The Press, 8 November 1937, p.10.

⁴⁴ I.L.G. Sutherland, The Maori Situation, (Wellington, Harry Tombs Ltd., 1935), p.2.

⁴⁵ The Press, February 27, 1933, p.8.

⁴⁶ R. W. Firth, Human Types, (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1938) p.27.

highest type of coloured people in the world."⁴⁷ No clue is given as to why this was the case, except that it was expected that Maori would assimilate into the white population.⁴⁸

Maori were the people of the land and were equal partners with Pakeha under the Treaty, however that position was undermined by Pakeha law, and by the very act of incorporation into the Pakeha identity. The co-option of Maoriness by visitors was oppressive in that it was used to fit the Pakeha condition. However within the European structure they resisted the definition of Otherness. For while Maori were to an certain extent assimilated, by their presence they provided a critique of the system, in that they represented memories of the previous century, for Pakeha.

The main body of this study is divided into sections. This is indicative not only of a racial division (between those who could be considered "white" English-speaking Europeans, and those who could not), but also of two contrasting viewpoints. Section One presents a study of both the policy and practise of British immigration in the interwar period. How New Zealand citizens saw their country's role within the international situation was as important as the perceived skills of individual migrants. In this sense then, the actual Britishness of the New Zealand character was not as valuable as its perception. In the same way that Benedict Anderson has argued that official nationalism concealed a discrepancy between the Hungarian nation and the plans of its ruling elites,⁴⁹ so in the New Zealand example the representation of New Zealand as a New Britain disguised the problems of identity between the creation of a new distinctly New Zealand nationalism and the existence of residents who were "more British than Britain." Chapter two serves as an introduction to the notion of British immigration as a deliberate colonisation

⁴⁷ Lord Bledisloe, former Governor General, before the Oversea Settlement Board, 20 April 1937 in A. J. C. P.5416:694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

⁴⁸ A. Ballara, Proud to be white? A Survey of Pakeha Prejudice in New Zealand, (Auckland, Heinemann Publishers, 1986).

⁴⁹ Anderson, p.110.

policy for an undercolonised land, and explores its methods and justifications. The three succeeding chapters in this section cover the impact of the three, most consciously promoted, types of British migrant on their host community. Of these, Chapter three considers the implications of the immigration of young males as ideal immigrants - in this instance, as good labouring stock and as the returning heroes of World War One. This war was to bring to light new dimensions regarding immigration, and as several studies have made clear, the direct origins of the post-war migration and settlement policy must be traced back to the war years.⁵⁰ It is estimated that around 4,000 men who had been engaged in farming pursuits before 1914 lost their lives.⁵¹ War had caused a drain upon the nation's supply of bright young men, and at the same a constricting economic climate placed limitations upon governmental commitment, culminating in the need for a new means of encouraging the development of the labour force. Chapter four considers the brief foray into child migration schemes in the twenties. It also examines the implications of the perception of British youth as eminently suitable, and the impact of better understanding of the needs and rights of children. The final chapter in this section, Chapter five clarifies the position of the period's most desirable migrant type, the domestic servant, and the evolving role of women within the developing economy.

The resulting society clearly created a strong delineation between British citizens - both British and New Zealand-born - and Maori. Nationalist feeling was based on the assumption that people who were not British Empire citizens would wish to become so. Yet interaction of the majority population with

⁵⁰ I. M. Drummond, Imperial Economic Policy 1917-1939, (Toronto, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1974) chapter 2; G. F. Plant, Oversea Settlement: Migration From the United Kingdom to the Dominions, (London, Oxford University Press, 1951). More recently D. Kennedy, "Empire Migration in Post-War Reconstruction: The role of the Oversea Settlement Committee, 1919-1922", Albion, Vol.29, pp.403-19.

⁵¹ New Zealand Farmers' Union Inc. report, in British Overseas Settlement Delegation to New Zealand, 1923, (Cd. 2167, XI 1924), p.39.

Maori was at times stilted, prejudicial and limited.⁵² Arguably however, the existence of racism within was not necessarily a detracting factor in the formation of colonial societies like the Dominions; Avner Offner argues that racism could often "confirm" and "reinforce" the principles of "democracy, civic equality and solidarity" because of the appeal that exclusion had, to populist politics.⁵³ In all the "white" colonies, some kind of ethnocentrism was used to establish the primacy of "white" Northern Europeans. The issue of discriminatory immigration restrictions illustrates the kind of nation policy-makers were attempting to create. In the interwar period immigration assistance was only available to British migrants, and discriminatory legislation limiting entry restricted and monitored the entry of people not of 'British birth and parentage'. In effect this type of migration fed the existing order of dominance. The distinction not only excluded Asians and non-"white" peoples, but also naturalised British subjects and their children and the aboriginal natives of any British colony or dominion.⁵⁴

Migrants were all different but they were shaped equally by the need to frame New Zealand's cultural identity. For the purposes of Section Two the focal point is on those migrants who were conceptually viewed as unsuitable. Chapter six discusses the unwillingness of policy-makers to actively help aliens to become assimilated. The importance of the definition of the term "alien" is increasingly important. In the two following chapters, which consider Asian immigration and the impact of the international refugee crisis in the late thirties respectively, the implications of a preconceived idea of The Other are examined. The issue of "colour" was an anxiety shared by all the Pacific rim nations and served to delineate the majority English-speaking societies from their Asian neighbours.

⁵² McKinnon, p.3.

⁵³ A. Offer, "'Pacific rim' societies," in J. Eddy and D. Schreuder, p.235.

⁵⁴ Chapters 6 and 8. For statistical purposes, Indians, Australian aborigines and Maori were 'foreigners' while white New Zealanders, Australians and Canadians regarded themselves, to be the rightful British occupants.

Furthermore, the existence of a resistance to migration within New Zealand society was a product of certain types of group identification. A 1939 survey designed to solicit "all shades of public opinion", found that some opposition to migration was founded on economic or class-based conceptions.⁵⁵ In the employment-conscious environment of the late 1930s, immigration was considered to not only increase competition for jobs, but to increase the incidence of unemployment and delay the possibility of the unemployed regaining the workforce, and to generally endanger the standard of living. Furthermore non-voluntary immigration like the schemes of the early twenties were considered to be costly and of questionable value. Those who came to New Zealand fitted certain class categories - they were required to either fit certain occupational types and thereby be subsidised in their passage or else be able to afford the cost of the passage themselves as well as the cost of living in New Zealand. The New Zealand citizens surveyed in 1939 felt however that a lack of controls on quality of migrants were detrimental to national development; they felt that immigration in general and immigration schemes in particular would cause the arrival of people "not suited to life in the Dominions". Issues of respectability were at stake.

Just as Maori were being classified and defined in relation to their civilisation, so too European immigrants were recruited to fit a particular profile of New Zealand. Respectable "white" British immigrants, many of them assisted, were expected to fit respectably into the existing social order, without problems. While respectability had been achieved by the labouring class within New Zealand and accommodated egalitarian values, the arrival of strangers to the society was potentially threatening.⁵⁶ "Suitable" workers were intended to fit into and contribute to the respectable unskilled classes, but their

⁵⁵ The New Zealand Five-Million Club, "Report of Migration Committee," in A. J. C. P.5416:694, M326/22, New Zealand migration policy: general.

⁵⁶E. Olssen, Building the New World. Work, Politics and Society in Caversham 1880s-1920s, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1995), pp.177, 255.

own suitability was questionable if many were drawn from the lower classes in Britain, and generally rough, uneducated and without ambition.⁵⁷ The absence of a formal class structure was no doubt attractive to workers attempting to better themselves, and to those the country was potentially a worker's paradise.⁵⁸ What would prevail? The potential of the New Zealand "social laboratory" (a term coined by William Pember Reeves) to remake itself existed but was undoubtedly constrained by the perceived "suitability" of its intended migrants. The immigrants were themselves all different in their situations but were uniformly shaped by a need to frame the New Zealand cultural identity. One could readily ask, does immigration strengthen or weaken the national ethos?

Defusing the semantic minefield.

A study of this nature has some problems of definition, as was raised by Donald Akenson in his book *Half the World from Home*.⁵⁹ A study of the impact of immigration necessitates consideration of the nature of migration. Since the early eighteenth century the inward flow of migrants have overwhelmingly been from the British Isles. Yet as Akenson notes, the words "English" and "British" are "semantic nests" in which these commonly used terms belie the very plurality of the British isles. Indeed the plurality is very evident; one can "see" the Irish, Welsh, Scots and English in New Zealand's statistics and census figures. Allowing that the British Isles are home to a wide variety of people whose cultural diversity is not manifest, there is in this instance a need for terminology which expresses the nature and the origins of migrants and migration to New Zealand. I propose to discuss specific nationality where

⁵⁷Ibid., p.238.

⁵⁸ See chapter 2

⁵⁹ D. H. Akenson, Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand, (Wellington, Victoria University Press, 1990), pp.1-10.

possible but with regard to the British Isles the matter is less distinct. As the major partner in all legislation regarding immigration to New Zealand was the United Kingdom government, which governed the entire British Isles, all inhabitants there were considered British citizens despite their national groupings, for the purposes of immigration.

Before the early 1920s emigrants and immigrants were rather imprecisely defined by their entrance or departure from New Zealand in statistics, therefore true annual figures were difficult to obtain. For the purposes of this exercise immigrants can be defined as those visitors who are shown in the statistics as intending permanent residency.

Most new arrivals who came from the British Isles were known as "Homies" or "New Chums". Similarly the use of the word "colonial" indicates the settlers and new territories tied to a parent state, and as such denotes the formulation of unique culture, rather than, as one might suppose, a focus on past practises.⁶⁰

The definition of non-British is rather more problematic because it composed of more diverse groupings who do not even share geographic proximity. The terminology used in this study was chosen because of its contemporary usage, and the value that the terminology had in public perceptions, rather than of the existence of a common set of characteristics. In this sense then, all non-British immigrants were perceived as "alien" immigrants, while all non-"white" non-British "aliens" were "race aliens". The term is misleading because it brings together those who did not have geographical proximity, and because it suggests that Britishness is the norm. However, this thesis is structured on the basis of the British/non-British division because that echoes a large contemporary influence which shaped immigration.

⁶⁰ P. O'Farrell, Vanished Kingdoms. Irish in Australia and New Zealand. A Personal Excursion, Kensington, New South Wales, 1990, p.xviii.

A note on sources.

The primary problem in undertaking a study of immigration in this period, is the dearth of surviving primary source material from the Immigration and Labour departments. Many of the early archives of the Labour Department, which also held Immigration Department files were destroyed in the Hope Gibbons fire of 1952. For this reason the rather piecemeal primary source material I have uncovered at the National Archives, is on diverse topics and in various department files. To offset this problem I have used Dominions Office material obtained from the Australian Joint Copying project in Canberra. The other alternative has been a reliance on the M. A. thesis of F. A. Ponton. Ponton's 1946 thesis, "Immigration Restriction in New Zealand, A study of policy from 1908 to 1939," is possibly the only record and detail existing of many of the files that were destroyed and for that reason is invaluable for students of early twentieth century New Zealand immigration policy.

My final attempt to address this problem has been to add a component of first hand experiences to my work. After placing an advertisement for individuals who had knowledge of immigration in the 1920s and 1930s, I established contact with nineteen people who had themselves immigrated at this time, or had at the very least, a good understanding of the experiences of a close family member. Of these people I selected six to interview personally who I hoped would provide some evidence to supplement the areas I was studying; a brother and sister who were knowledgeable of their father's immigration as a young man; a gentleman who left Germany as a child refugee; another man who immigrated as a farm boy; and two women who had each immigrated as children in family groups. The remaining fourteen I sent general questionnaires to (see appendix 1). Those whom I interviewed filled out a release form as well as a biographical information sheet (see appendix 2),

and answered questions similar to those asked of correspondents. I presently hold all copies of the recordings and correspondence, and will be depositing them in the MacMillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

The majority of the subjects were of "white" British nationality, and in an attempt to gain more ethnic diversity in my oral sample I used the archives of the Oral History Unit in Wellington, to review the transcripts of three further refugees. Personal experiences of non-"white" immigrants were taken from an excellent study in Asian immigration, and from a resource on the experience of migrant women; Ng Bickleen Fong's 1956 book *The Chinese in New Zealand. A study in assimilation*,⁶¹ and Adrienne Jansen's book *I have in my arms both ways. Stories by immigrant women*.⁶² Other good sources include Manying Ip's book *Home Away From Home. Life Stories of Chinese women in New Zealand*,⁶³ and Ann Beaglehole's post-graduate work and subsequent works on the experiences of refugees from Hitler.

Another problem for this study has been a lack of consistent and comprehensive statistics. There is no completely reliable run of sources for the period from 1919 to 1939. The best substitute source has been *Statistical Report on Population and Buildings* which was compiled by the Census and Statistics Department which was also responsible for the *New Zealand Official Yearbook*. Between these two, there is consistency in figures.

Between various texts consulted in this study, conflicting figures have been given, and I attribute this to differing definitions of immigrants. I have attempted where possible to separate those people intending permanent residency in New Zealand from the general mass of incoming passengers. While this does not allow for those undecided persons who decide to become residents after some time, it does give a more accurate picture of immigrants than figures which also include tourists, on-going passengers and business

⁶¹ Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1959.

⁶² Wellington, Allen and Unwin, 1990.

⁶³ Auckland, New Woman's Press, 1990.

people. Unfortunately the statistics for people intending permanent residence were not kept prior to 1921. Similarly in 1931 the cut off date for the immigration year was changed from the end of the calendar year to March 31 of the following year, creating a fifteen month anomaly for 1931.

Chapter one: "British capital and expert brains": the economics of the New Zealand immigration policy, 1919-1939.

The dramatic decline of international migration in the 1920s and 30s is well known and well documented.¹ It is also well known that the world wide economic recession was partially responsible, as capital flows can be linked to the movement of labour.² This discussion will look into the effect that economic nationalism, a policy where a country insulates itself from the international economy, had on immigration to New Zealand. In this respect the focus of the chapter lies in examining the extent to which economic recovery can explain the New Zealand government's inclination to effectively discourage immigration.

Every instance of migration is usually accompanied by an investment of foreign or domestic capital to provide a means of production of industrial or agricultural employment for the migrants involved. Immigration is impractical if no market can be found for the goods the migrants produce. By the same token, however, the investment made by migrants, and their ability to draw in investment in a "chain migration of money", was a significant factor in late nineteenth century New Zealand.³ In the early twenties, it was widely understood in New Zealand that the direction and quality of new investment from abroad could strongly influence the demand both for employment and for migrant labour, and in the thirties the argument was used to hold off the formulation of immigration policy. Oscillations in prices and trade inevitably influence immigration policy-making. This was noted by a writer from *Round*

¹ For a discussion of various regions see T.J. Hatton and J.G. Williamson, (eds) Migration and the International Labor Market, 1850-1939, (London, Routledge, 1994); M. Roe, Australia, Britain, and Migration, 1915-1940: A study of desperate hopes, (New York, Colorcraft, 1995).

² D. Denoon, "The Political Economy of Labour Migration to Settler Societies: Australasia, Southern Africa and Southern South America Between 1890 and 1914," in S. Marks (ed) International Labour Migration. Historical Perspectives, (Hounslow, Maurice Temple Smith, 1984), pp.188-9; B. Thomas, "Migration and International Investment," in A. R. Hall (ed) The Export of Capital from Britain, London, Methuen, 1968.

³ Belich, p.357.

Table, the magazine created as a vehicle for imperialist discourse around the Empire⁴;

. . . If the mother country in its own interests, and the interests of its industries, is desirous of stimulating migration to New Zealand, here is an opportunity for some of its industrial leaders to invest capital in the development of our wastelands. Once that development takes place, there should be no lack of immigrants in its wake. The question of capital lies at the root of the problem, experience showing that migration has always been largely influenced by the flow of capital to the country to which the immigrant is making his way.⁵

In the late nineteenth century there occurred a dramatic transformation of the economies of all Britain's colonies.⁶ Capital investment in all these societies was great, with the Australasian colonies in particular receiving investment of approximately £75 per capita, as compared with £55 per capita in South Africa and £1.2 per capita in Canada, Newfoundland, India and Ceylon.⁷ In New Zealand this investment was a welcome respite from the depressed years of 1886 to 1892, which were marked by an excess of departures over arrivals. By 1914 the country could boast a large population increase, a niche in the British food market and enviable social welfare legislation. All too soon, investment was curtailed by the financing of war, and after war came a series of economic depressions which further undermined economic security.

The impact of an international economy gains more impact in the light of New Zealand's status as an industrialising nation. Industrialisation is the process by which an economy which is most predominantly agricultural is reconstructed as one where the manufacture of goods for internal sale or export has an increasing part to play. New Zealand could be described as an industrialised society even though a great deal of its earnings came from the export of farming produce, because the development of production

⁴ for more discussion on this topic, see J. Kendle, "The Round Table Movement. Lionel Curtis and the Formation of the New Zealand Groups in 1910," New Zealand Journal of History, (hereafter as N.Z.J.H.) Vol. 1 (1), April 1967, pp.33-50.

⁵ The Round Table, 16, 1925-26, p.666

⁶ Denoon, p.188.

⁷ Figures given in *ibid.*

necessitated the geographical concentration of people for labour purposes.⁸ The suggestion has been made, however, that the evolution of New Zealand society may be better described as 'modernisation'; a term which denotes the population movement between cities and towns, more sophisticated modes of production and distribution, more skilled and specialised forms of labour and the rise of secularisation.⁹ More importantly, however, Erik Olssen argues that the "fragmented regions and localities" of New Zealand had merged into a modern society by the end of the 1920s.¹⁰ In New Zealand towns and cities at this time urbanisation and modernisation were present, although they had a rural nature; the "founding colonial stock were predominantly villagers in upbringing, and . . . the sprinkling of townsmen among them included many who were emigrating because they hankered for a return to rural life."¹¹ Clare Toynbee maintains that the presence of a rural mentality in New Zealand cities and towns had a lasting impact on their character, and points to the inclusion of a question on poultry raising in all censuses between 1921 and 1971.¹²

New Zealand's public and private expenditure were based on two major assumptions; firstly that agricultural exports would continue to expand, and secondly that the population would continue to increase at a similarly rapid pace. In the pre-World War One period New Zealand had been a primary producer of meat, wool and dairy products of which a large percentage was sent to Britain. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, even during the depression, Britain consistently purchased at least 80 percent of New Zealand exports, except when other countries increased their purchases.¹³ By 1937, 93 percent

⁸ R. Miles and P. Spoonley, "the Political Economy of Labour Migration: An alternative to the sociology of 'race' and 'ethnic relations' in New Zealand," Australia and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, Vol. 21 (1), 1985, p.15.

⁹ C. Toynbee, Her Work and His. Family, Kin and Community in New Zealand 1900- 1930, (Wellington, Victoria University Press, 1995), p.21-22.

¹⁰ E. Olssen, "Towards a New Society " in G. W. Rice (ed) The Oxford History of New Zealand, (Auckland, University Press, 1992), p.254.

¹¹ R. Arnold, "The village and the globe: aspects of the social origins of schooling in Victorian New Zealand," Australia and New Zealand History of Education Society, 5, (2) p.2.

¹² Toynbee, pp.24-25.

¹³ N.Z.O.Y. 1924 to 1937. In 1924 only 74 percent of exports went to Britain, but both the United

of New Zealand's exported primary produce went to Great Britain.¹⁴ In return its imports were composed mainly of British manufactured goods and it relied heavily on British injections of capital. The pressure of the great depression caused significant doubts about the validity of these assumptions.

The New Zealand economy has, since its beginnings, been essentially agricultural, and as such the rural sector had primacy. As figure 1 demonstrates, throughout the interwar period pastoral products made up a larger share of New Zealand's export market than any other. Poverty was unevenly distributed, with wage-earners bringing home less than many farmers and self-employed individuals. In the 1920s, farmers held more control over politics, the economy and social attitudes than any other group.¹⁵ Not only did they provide four of the five Prime Ministers from 1912 to 1935, but the Farmers Union was the most powerful political pressure group. Little notice was given in 1920 to industry's labour shortage of 12,397 workers and instead farm labourers and miners were deemed to be special types worthy of nominated passage.¹⁶ Clearly the attitudes of the farming community had great importance in government policy, including immigration, and some consideration should be given to the impact of the most significant pastoral products to the New Zealand economy.

States and Canada more than doubled their usual purchases which accounted for 19 percent,

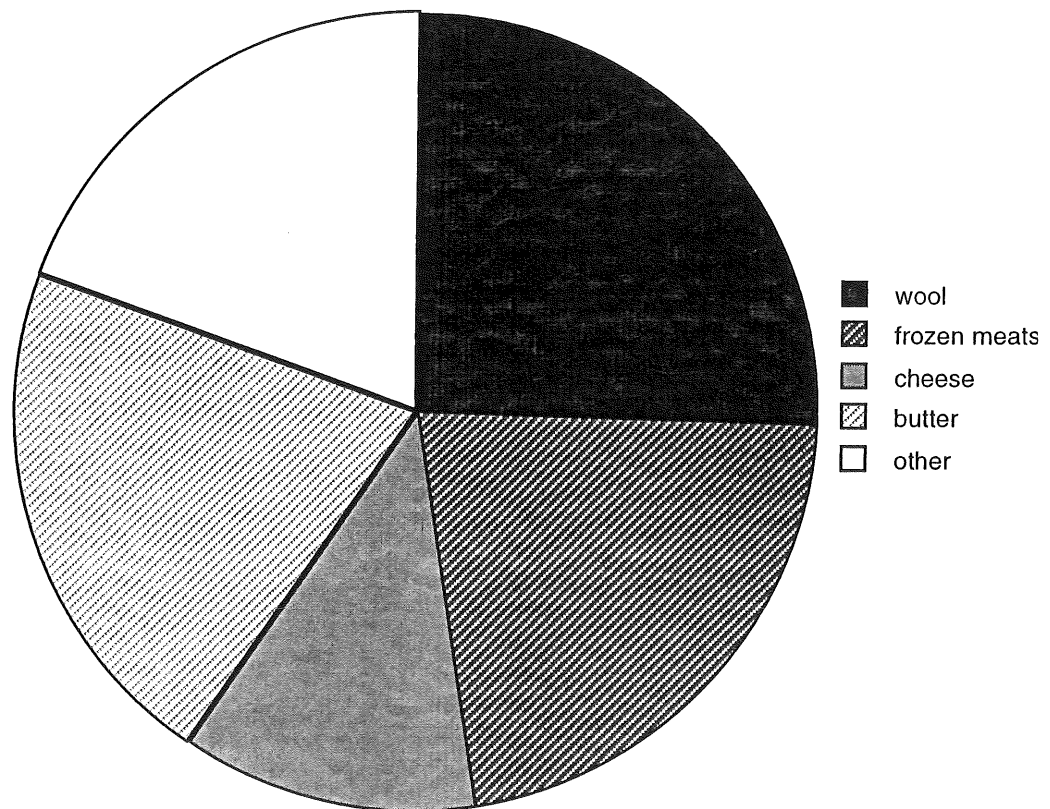
¹⁴ Figures cited in report by Lord Bledisloe given to the Overseas Settlement Board, 20 April 1937 in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy general.

¹⁵ M. Fairburn "The Farmers Take Over," *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, (Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.185. The election of Reform, the "premier farmers' party" in 1919 ensured the continuance of focus on farming as the central economic activity until 1935.

¹⁶ Annual Report of the Department of Immigration, *A.J.H.R.*, D-9, 1921.

figure 1

Proportions of New Zealand's total export value, 1914-1939.



∞Data was collated by calculating the total value of principle articles exported, 1914-39.

Source: New Zealand Official Yearbooks, 1917-1941. Export statistics.

Sheep farming for wool was the first viable primary product to be exported from New Zealand, along with frozen meats, butter and cheese, it made up over 80 percent of economic returns for exports (figure 1). After the war, the Imperial Requisition which had been paid for New Zealand butter, cheese, meat and wool ended, and in the first year of uncontrolled prices there was a significant slump. By 1921 a post-war recession in trade had begun to affect employment in New Zealand. The situation was inadvertently worsened by government-fuelled price speculation. In considering its options, the Reform government opted to ignore the interests of its urban wage earners, and

submitted to farming cries to dismiss public servants, allow wage cuts and to reduce state spending.¹⁷ For the rest of the decade, export prices fluctuated, dipping again in 1925-26 and then reaching record levels in 1926-27.¹⁸ In the matter of tariffs the government opted to continue moderate protection and resisted pressure from manufacturers for higher protection, and from farmers and users of imports, for less.¹⁹ The initial crisis appeared to be over. Importantly, however, many urban dwellers considered the political decision-making to be a clear degradation of their interests, and came to look towards the Labour party for some solution, as its policies were directed towards wage-earners. In fact, Labour was to become the political recipient of the new interest in monetary reform.²⁰

A fuller consideration of the trade record of these four products attests to the uncertain path that New Zealand exports, and thus New Zealand purchasing power, was following. While the amount of wool being exported was initially inconsistent in the years following World War One, from 1924 there was a relatively steady increase, which can also be seen in the quantities of butter, cheese and frozen meat exported (figures 2 and 3). Yet it does not follow that in 1924 there was a gradual increase in prosperity, primarily for the reason that the terms of trade, that is, the ratio of export prices to import prices, were not as constant. Returns for exports fluctuated more dramatically with the market affected by declines in the 1919-22 period, 1925 and more significantly from 1928-31 (figure 4). Ultimately while exports of primary produce were increasing in quantity the economic value they gave in return was declining.

¹⁷ Public Expenditure Adjustment Act 1921, 12 Geo. V, no.45.

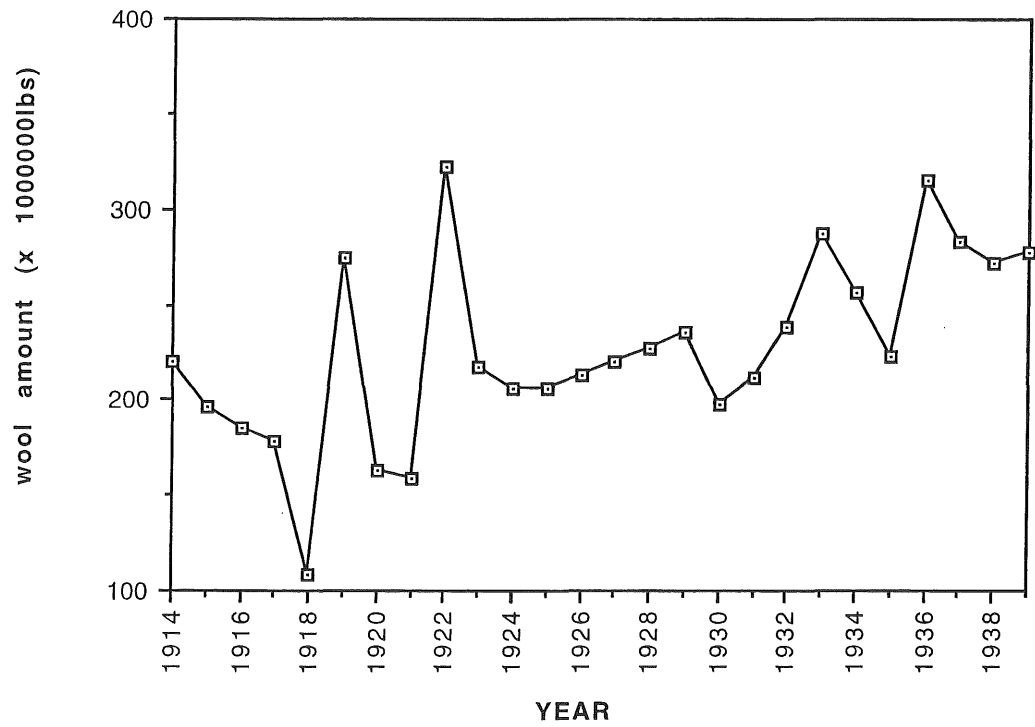
¹⁸ B. MacDonald, and D Thomson, "Mortgage Relief, Farm Finance, and Rural Depression in New Zealand in the 1930s", N.Z.J.H., Vol.21 (2), October 1987, p.229.

¹⁹ G. Hawke, "Australian and New Zealand Economic Development from about 1890 to 1940", in K. Sinclair (ed) Tasman Relations, New Zealand and Australia, 1788-1988, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1987), p.111.

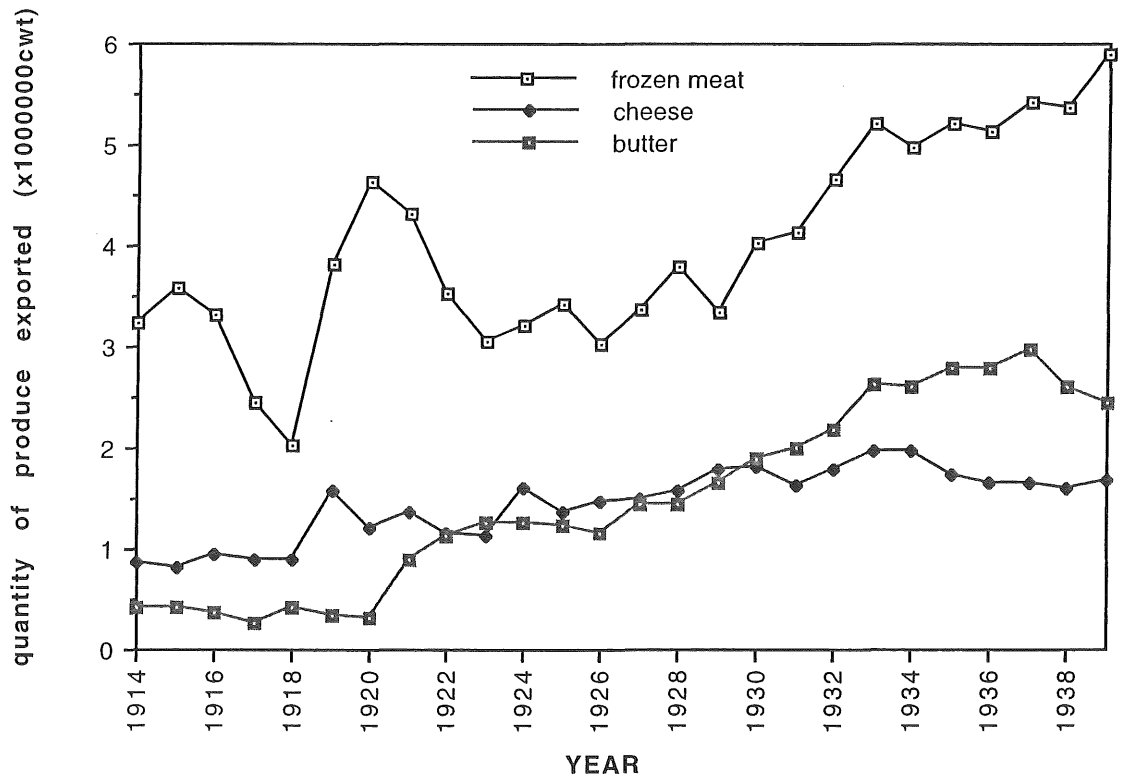
²⁰ L. Richardson, "Parties and Political Change," in Rice, p.221-226.

figures 2 and 3

Quantity of wool exported, 1914-1939.



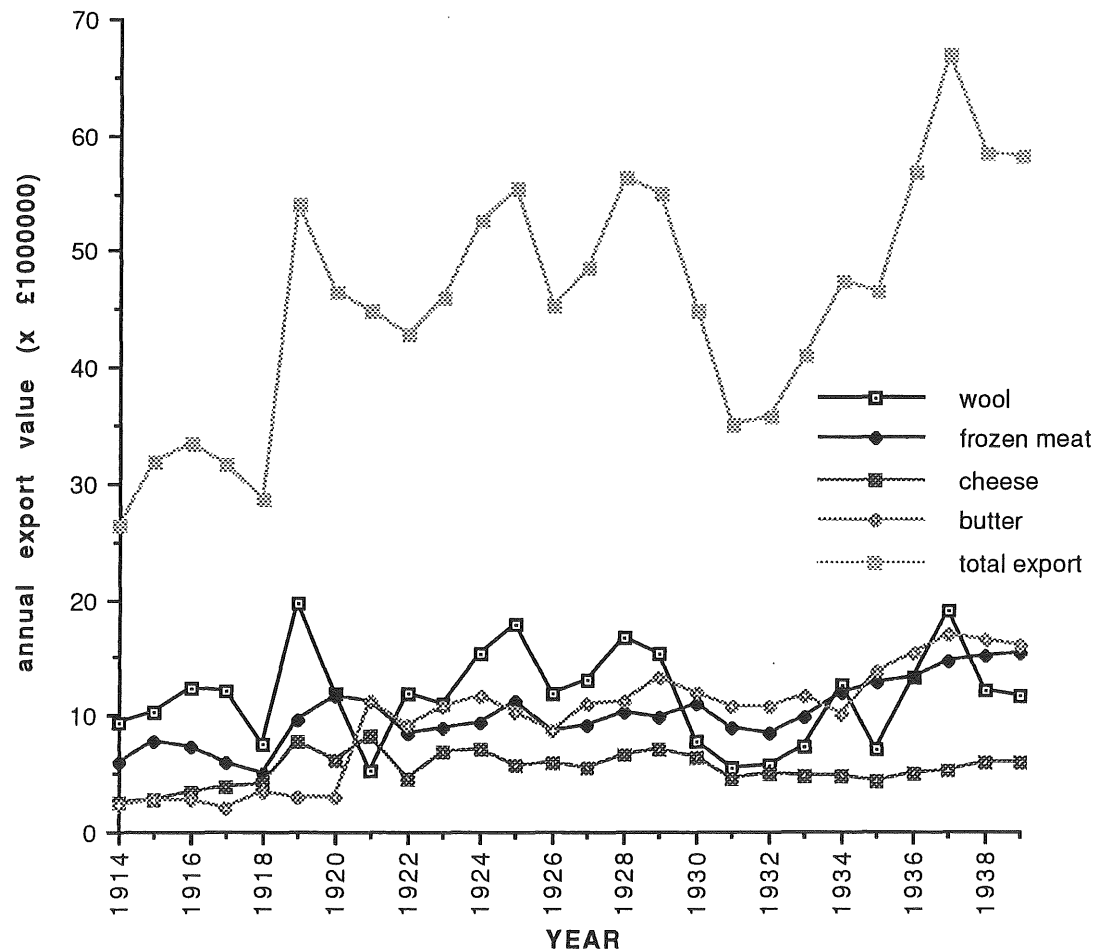
Quantity of frozen meats, butter and cheese exported, 1914-1939.



Source: New Zealand Official Yearbooks, 1917-1941. Export statistics.

figure 4

The annual export values of four important pastoral products as compared to the annual total of export values, 1914-1939.



Source: New Zealand Official Yearbooks, 1917-1941. Export statistics.

Rural interests also dominated immigration policy in the twenties as they dominated politics more generally. Initially links can be made between periods of reasonable economic security and the New Zealand government's willingness to accept assisted migration. New Zealand began to contribute to a scheme to assist nominated British immigrants to New Zealand in 1922 under the Empire Settlement Act. The nomination scheme was funded under a succession of 'passage agreements' by which the United Kingdom government shared costs via fare reductions. The passage agreement also provided loans

for migrants if nominated individuals could not pay the cost of a six-berth passage. Another scheme, the Imperial Free Passage Scheme (I.F.P.S.) allowed immigration of ex-service personnel to various parts of the empire. As will be discussed in section one, the assisted immigration schemes actively operated in the post world war period until 1927. At this time restrictions were made on the schemes which echoed the downwards fluctuations of economic returns in the late 1920s until the early to mid 1930s. Similarly while 1935 marked the eventual renewal of the schemes, it was also a period when export returns were on the increase and economic recovery was occurring.

Almost all of these assisted immigrants were intended by the New Zealand government and by potential employers in New Zealand to be employed in domestic service, in the case of women, or, in the case of men and school boy schemes, in rural labour. Many of the female migrants were desired for rural service, with farming groups justifying their calls for rural home helps as a measure to prevent hardship suffered by farmers wives and children.²¹ The Empire Settlement Act did not expire until 1937, but the restrictions placed on it in 1927-1928 by the New Zealand government limited it to separated families, domestics, single women, and Flock House, Salvation Army and Church of England "boys". As the economic depression set in, fewer people were assisted. Arguably the pre-1930 immigration propaganda was focused on gaining migrants for rural areas, because of an urban drain, but it also demonstrates the power of the rural vote.²²

The drive to create economic self-sufficiency and the reluctance to restart assisted immigration was in part a by-product of a 'war mentality' ; the focus on primary production with limited markets caused a limited ability to absorb

²¹ Various branches of Women's Division Farmers' Union and Farmers' Union to Mr Savage, November 1936, in L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46, parts 1-2, National Archives; New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, (hereafter as N.Z.P.D.) Vol.251, July 8 1938, p.337.

²² A. Mulgan, Home. A Colonial's Adventure, (London, Longmans Green and Co., 1930), p.207.

further settlers on the land.²³ For example the official organ of the New Zealand Labour movement, the New Zealand Alliance of Labour, voted against the existing immigration policy in September 1921 because it was "unfair and unjust not only to the working class of New Zealand but to those people who are arriving in the country under the impression that there is employment and housing awaiting them."²⁴ The immigration policy was, they argued, the "principal cause of unemployment". Organised Labour viewed the possibility of an accelerated immigration policy as a threat to the privileges enjoyed by "white" labour within a developing economy; the Maori population had never been incorporated into the New Zealand economy as wage labour.²⁵ More importantly, the attitude was reinforced by the total experience of the interwar years. There were a number of pre-existing beliefs about the possible impact of immigration on New Zealand, of which many were economically motivated by the difficulties of the late 1920s and early 1930s.²⁶

The world economic depression in 1930 caused the paralysis of the international capital market from late 1929. In origin it was external. Events in the markets of Europe and North America caused reductions in New Zealand's export receipts. In New Zealand the crisis manifested itself in the fall of money incomes, and in prices, although the rates of decline were different. The fall in prices was not as great as money incomes, which meant that different people were affected to differing extents.²⁷ Those people who had to meet certain commitments from the sale of commodities, such as farmers and the

²³ George Gibson in MacKay and Gibson, "Peopling the Empire," *The Listener*, 20 April 1939 in A.J.C.P.5426;718, M579/7, Empire publicity in relation to migration.

²⁴ Report of Conference convened by the New Zealand Alliance of Labour to discuss the questions of Unemployment and Immigration, Wellington, September 7-8, 1921 held in the Jim Roberts Collection, J. C. Beaglehole Room, Victoria University of Wellington.

²⁵ S. Constantine, "Immigration, population and New Zealand's destiny," British Review of New Zealand Studies, No. 3, 1990, p.21; D. Pearson cited in R. Miles, and P. Spoonley, "The Political Economy of Labour Migration: An alternative to the sociology of 'race' and 'ethnic relations' in New Zealand," Australia and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, Vol. 21 (1), 1985, p.10.

²⁶ New Zealand Five Hundred Club, Report of Migration Committee, in A.J.C.P.5416:694. M326/22, New Zealand migration policy: general.

²⁷ G. R. Hawke, The Evolution of the New Zealand Economy, (Auckland, Heinemann Educational Books, 1977), pp.12-13.

unemployed were the worst affected, while people gaining income from fixed interest securities, and those who received salaries in money terms, were the least affected. It also greatly reduced the movement of workers from one country to another because of restrictive measures on immigration in many countries caused by the slowness of the recovery of international trade. Between 1929 and 1931 the Reform and Coalition governments expanded rural subsidies and depreciated currency against the sterling in response to what was thought to be another short term price fluctuation.²⁸

By 1931 even Britain was compelled to abandon Free Trade. Eric Hobsbawm sees the interwar period as being a good test for nationalism and states because of the global protectionism that the "economic blizzard" caused.²⁹ Although most modern societies dreamed in the era after World War One, of a return to the world economy they had possessed in 1914, a return to private enterprise free trade was impracticable because even at that early stage, capitalist economies were moving into the direction of concentrated and protected private enterprise.³⁰ New Zealand is one such example. At the 1930 Imperial Conference, the New Zealand delegation made it very clear that they were more interested in economic matters than inter-imperial relations.³¹ The Prime Minister, George Forbes, emphasised that New Zealand was keen to leave the inter-imperial relationship as it had been in 1926. But he was unwilling to accept new proposals for the sake of unanimity. In contrast he talked at length on the extension of inter-imperial trade.

After the rural focus of the governments of the 1920s, the governments of the 30s sought economic protectionism in plans for an assured market. In this, immigration had no priority at all. The move towards economic protectionism had, however, occurred in the aftermath of the depression. In April 1931 on

²⁸ Fairburn, "The Farmers" p.185.

²⁹ Ibid., p.132.

³⁰ Hobsbawm, pp.131-132.

³¹ P. Williams, "New Zealand at the 1930 Imperial Conference", *N.Z.I.H.*, Vol. 5, no. 1, April 1971, pp.31-48. At the 1937 Conference the subject of immigration was not even discussed.

the justification that it would protect the labour market and prevent any further aggravation of unemployment, New Zealand authorities moved to prohibit the entry of people of 'any specified nationality or race or of any specified class or occupation' or limit the numbers of any of these people who might land in any specified time.³² More significantly it gave the Governor-General the power to declare the provisions applicable to intending immigrants of British birth and parentage.³³ Many Britons were still under the impression that work was plentiful in New Zealand, so it was considered in the best interests of prospective immigrants as well as the labour force in New Zealand to create an emergency measure to prevent workers from emigrating.³⁴ The measure was an abrupt change of policy in that previously legislators had trusted in the discretionary powers of officials in London to select suitable migrants. For the first time legislation governing "non-white" migrants also governed "white" British migrants. This was a startling development, and for almost a whole day members debated the impact of these provisions. The Labour member for Christchurch South, Ted Howard, was particularly concerned by the unlimited power this gave interested parties;

The Bill does not restrict immigration, but it puts into the hands of a group the power to say who shall and who shall not come into this country. . . I do not like this Bill, and I dislike it for the same reason that every one of the honourable gentlemen now on the Treasury benches who was in Parliament a few years ago gave in opposing similar measures - that the Bill proposes to give the Government a blank cheque.³⁵

The Prime Minister was defensive in his response, stating that although the measure was "government by regulation", the purpose was fundamentally

³² The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931, 21 Geo V, no.35. See T.D.H. Hall, "The Status of Aliens in New Zealand," in N. McKenzie (ed) The Legal Status of Aliens in Pacific Countries. An International survey of law and practice concerning immigration, naturalisation and deportation of aliens and their legal rights and disabilities, (London, Oxford University Press, 1937), p.280.

³³ The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931, 21 Geo V, no.35. s.2 and s.3(2).

³⁴ N.Z.P.D., Vol.227, pp.874, 876, 950-955.

³⁵ N.Z.P.D., Vol.227, p.880.

related to the avoidance of further unemployment. "There is no other intention behind it - no sinister design, as one honourable member suggested."³⁶

table 1:

year	Number of New Zealand permanent residents emigrating to Australia	Number of Australian permanent residents emigrating to New Zealand
1921	920	2128
1922	1348	1669
1923	1656	1586
1924	1470	1576
1925	1171	1881
1926	1637	1785
1927	2855	1370
1928	2455	1412
1929	1578	1859
1930	955	3208
1931	626	1563
1932	932	675
1933-1934 [†]	2045	734
1934-1935	509	707
1935-1936	2136	785
1936-1937	1729	1182
1937-1938	1704	1787
1938-1939	1592	3021
1939-1940	1564	3951

[†] Fifteen month term from 1st of January 1933 to 31st of March 1934.

Source: N. Z. O. Y. 1923-1942.

In actual fact, the Act did not dramatically alter the system of restrictions that had been put in place from 1927. While it appeared to place "British" migrants on a par with less welcomed immigrants it merely required them to obtain permits. In fact, Ponton has argued that the only Britons restricted were third class passengers from Australia.³⁷ Even then, the effect was not so great; shipping companies advised passengers not to travel third class. At any rate New Zealand had been losing migrants to Australia rather than gaining them since 1932 (see table 1). The provisions of this Act were extended until 31

³⁶ Ibid., p.870.

³⁷ F. A. Ponton, "Immigration Restriction in New Zealand. A study of policy from 1908 to 1939", M. A. (History), Victoria University of Wellington, 1946, p.93.

December 1936, when it automatically expired. Interestingly, in January 1930 additional provisions were placed on the issue of temporary permits to visitors to ensure that taxes were not spent maintaining visitors during their stay.³⁸ Conditions of entry and of visitations were becoming tighter.

By implication the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act reflected a growing lack of interest in the subject of immigration, in favour of the more pressing issue of economic recovery. On several occasions in 1931, the Minister of Immigration Mr Smith was called upon to reassure the House that the assisted immigration scheme had indeed ended.³⁹ In 1933 the newly formed Five Million Club, an interest group led by Speaker of the House W. E. Barnard and named for its intention to bring a number of immigrants into the country, found that no party in Parliament and no prominent citizens or public bodies were prepared to interest themselves in the matter of immigration.⁴⁰ *The Press* in its January and February issues showed a marked preoccupation with unemployment figures, the need to find work for young women and men, and suggestions for economic recovery but no mention of immigration.⁴¹ There was a clear inward focus, both on a local and national level. In September 1933, long time party whip, Ted Howard articulated the rising tide of opinion;

I think we are going to be driven into a state of nationalism. Therefore we should concentrate on this country. We should say. 'Here is the country that is in trouble; here is the country that we have to get out of trouble.' We should not exist only to provide sausage meat for people overseas. That is a poor outlook for a magnificent country that should be able to provide food, clothing and housing for its people without importing a single article.⁴²

By the mid 1930s the price rises of primary produce were increasing confidence in the country's primary sector. This optimism derived from higher prices was channelled by the New Zealand Government into a desire to

³⁸ *New Zealand Gazette*, No.2, 16 January 1930.

³⁹ *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol.228, p.206

⁴⁰ A. F. Castle of the Five Million Club to Lord Elton, 15 June 1937 in A.J.C.P.5416:694. M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

⁴¹ *The Press*, 1 January to 28 February 1933.

⁴² *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol.236, September 28, 1933, pp.170-171.

increase the standard of living. However, the Labour government which had come into power in 1935, inherited "a traditional hostility to immigration" from previous administrations which had been set by the depression.⁴³ Labour took office with an ambitious programme of reforms, among them state control of currency and credit, the abolition of relief works, the creation of employment at a living wage, the promotion of secondary industries, the restoration of wage cuts, and the creation of a free national health system.⁴⁴ Within a year all these policies had been embodied in legislation. On 10 September 1936 the government announced that arrangements had been completed with the Reserve Bank of New Zealand for the provision of necessary funds to begin a comprehensive plan of housing construction which was to be high-grade and reasonably priced.⁴⁵ It was a confident move given the large amount of money required to finance it.

The Dominions office closely followed signs of improvement in the Dominion economies because of its interest in the renewal of Empire migration. On the occasion of the Minister of Finance, Walter Nash's visit to London in 1936 he was invited to an unofficial meeting with the Overseas Settlement Board to discuss "the problem of migration".⁴⁶ However Nash was unwilling to discuss the issue seriously, arguing that the New Zealand government's priority was to reduce unemployment figures from approximately 35,000 to

⁴³ Arguably this "tradition" was present within the labour movement as early as September 1923. See Nash 7, 0049, New Zealand Labour Movement and Immigration 1923, National Archives.

⁴⁴ W. B. Sutch, The Quest for Security in New Zealand, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1942), p.123.

⁴⁵ Governor General of New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 12 October 1936, in A.J.C.P.5416:694. M332/2, New Zealand: unemployment: Finance Act allocations: housing scheme. The Finance Act (No.2) 1936 gave, among other things, authority for the Minister of Finance to borrow up to £13,000,000 for public works, construction of main highways and housing. See also J. G. Coates, Housing in New Zealand. An Outline of Policy, (Wellington, Government Printers, 1935).

⁴⁶ Report of Lord Hartington's visit to Australia and New Zealand, 17 February 1937, Overseas Settlement Board, in A.J.C.P.5406:666, M2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners; Notes of the nineteenth meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 1 December 1936, in A.J.C.P.5418:700, M458/1-73, society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women: staff: policy: finances, activities: statistics: publicity.

between ten and fifteen thousand. The decline of the building industry during the depression had highlighted its importance as an employer of labour and illustrated the need for a long-term plan for the industry.⁴⁷ The government had signalled their intention to build 1,000 homes over a six month period, under a programme directed by the Housing Construction Branch of the State Advances Corporation. The Branch would use contractors to build the first state houses at Miramar, and as a panacea Nash, who was also the Minister in Charge of State Advances, said it was possible that they might require building trades people as immigrants if enough were not found locally. This was an unpopular move with workers employed on the State housing schemes in Wellington, and their Trade Unions brought the matter to the attention of the Government.⁴⁸

Nash's only suggestion regarding immigration had a clear focus on industrial development. When prospects for land settlement, the traditional focal point for migration, were raised for discussion, Nash was unencouraging, stating that it was impractical unless markets could be found for the produce grown.⁴⁹ When pressed, Government statements on the issue were cautious.⁵⁰ If the Dominions Office were uncertain as to the nature of prospective migration schemes, they were left in no doubt by the Minister of Housing and Immigration H. T. Armstrong. While in London in November 1936, he hinted at the labour-related view of migration schemes when he stated that he could not stand for "unorganised" immigration, that is, all migrants should already have employment organised.⁵¹ On another visit eight months later, Armstrong stressed this matter again and indicated that the government was looking into

⁴⁷ G. Ferguson, Building the New Zealand Dream, (Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1994), p.124.

⁴⁸ The Press, Editorial, 2 November 1937.

⁴⁹ Notes of the nineteenth meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 1 December 1936, p.7, in A.J.C.P.5418:700, M458/1-73, society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women: staff: policy: finances: activities: statistics: publicity.

⁵⁰ N.Z.P.D., Vol.247, p.493.

⁵¹ Memo from Mr Hale, Dominions Office, 21 November 1936 in A.J.C.P.5416:694 , M326/1, New Zealand migration policy: general.

the matter.⁵² However the matter was a sensitive one, and there is a sense that if the Minister differed in his opinion from the rest of the Cabinet, he was guided in the matter by his more senior colleagues. When Dan Sullivan the Minister of Industries and Commerce, wrote to Armstrong about suggestions on the matter made by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, he was informed;

... the Prime Minister and the Hon. the Minister of Finance have the question under consideration. I would therefore suggest that it is inadvisable to comment on the resolutions contained in your memorandum.⁵³

Prime Minister Michael Savage reiterated these migration prospects on a visit to London in June 1937, by arguing that marketing, migration and defence were interconnected. This viewpoint created a stalemate. Savage maintained that without greater numbers, New Zealand's markets could not be increased, and while New Zealand was committed to the policy of collective security, the country could not contribute fully to imperial defence without a larger population. However he was not prepared to renew migration and increase the population if, as he believed, it would reduce the standard of living. This rejection of previous defence policy was unheard of. Prior to 1935 the New Zealand government had been content to follow Britain's lead, and was relatively inactive in the League of Nations.⁵⁴

Savage's rhetoric on immigration placed a clear emphasis on a British prerogative for economic assistance if the Dominions wanted to resume migration. The Savage Government's commitment was to find employment for New Zealanders first of all, before deciding on any scheme of immigration, with the inference that they expected the support of the trade unions on the

⁵² Notes of interview between Mr Armstrong and Dr. Harrop, 21 July 1937, in Labour Department files, L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2, National Archives.

⁵³ Armstrong to Sullivan, 2 October 1936 in L 1, 22/1/3. Suggestions about state-aided migration, 1936-46, pt. 1, National Archives.

⁵⁴ B. S. Bennett, New Zealand's Moral Foreign Policy 1935-1939: the Promotion of Collective Security through the League of Nations, (Wellington, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1988), p.2

issue of labour shortages.⁵⁵ The New Zealand government expected Britain to expand its markets for New Zealand produce in return for British workers. Savage wasted few words in denying the resumption of migration, stating that "so long as Britain restricts purchases of the Dominion's produce, it is no use planning to send out more people to raise more of that produce."⁵⁶ He inferred that the New Zealand government was in no hurry to finance another migration scheme because the prosperity which arose out of Labour Government policy would increase and maintain a higher standard of living and in that way attract immigrants without the need for specific directives.⁵⁷ Indeed, in view of a surplus of unskilled labour Savage was considering the possibility of greater controls over immigration, "possibly by means of the extension of the permit system to persons living in the British Empire."⁵⁸

The Prime Minister's only allowances were to the discussion of two aspects of Labour policy, industrialisation and Social Welfare benefits. Labour intended to promote new industries and extend and redevelop existing industries in its term.⁵⁹ Savage was interested in drawing the focus away from the land to the development of secondary industries, stating that when eventually migration did restart, he believed new settlers would ideally be artisans, a matter which was not welcomed with as great an enthusiasm by the Overseas Settlement Board.⁶⁰ He also envisaged an age restriction for migrants

⁵⁵ Sir Harry Batterbee to Sir Thomas Inskip, 18 May 1939 in A.J.C.P.5531:957, Z86/2-12, New Zealand: unemployment: 1938-39 report of department of Labour: correspondence and press clippings on general situation (May 1939- July 1941).

⁵⁶ "Want Immigrants" A Lost Horizon. Emigration and Development in A.J.C.P.5425:715, M567/6, Unofficial migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference 1937: Empire Development Council. Mr Savage reiterated this view at a meeting with the Overseas Settlement Board, 17 June 1937. A.J.C.P.5406:666, M2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners.

⁵⁷ Shannon Boyd to Garnett, 20 March 1939, in, A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/26, New Zealand migration policy: general.

⁵⁸ Batterbee to Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 5 October 1939 in A.J.C.P.5531:957, Z88/12, New Zealand: unemployment: 1938-39 report of department of Labour: correspondence and press clippings on general situation (May 1939- July 1941).

⁵⁹ Minute Book for the Bureau of Industry, 18 May 1936 in I. C. 44, 1, Transportation and Motor Vehicle Assembly in New Zealand, National Archives.

⁶⁰ Meeting between the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Savage, 22 June 1937 in A.J.C.P.5531:957, Z88/12, New Zealand: unemployment: 1938-39 report of department of

or, at the very least, some scheme of reciprocity in social insurance with Britain as regards those people who chose to migrate as late as forty-five. Both matters contributed to the drive for a better standard of living for those people already residing in the dominion.

By the late 1930s there was considerable interest in Britain in the restarting of Empire migration. In February 1937 Lord Hartington from the Overseas Settlement Board in London reported back on a recent visit to Australia and Zealand. In his view the situation was depressing in terms of migration but interesting politically.⁶¹ The new government was embarking on an ambitious programme of reform; legislation which fixed statutory wages at a set rate accentuated unemployment problems which still existed. However prices for primary products, like wool, had risen and the revenue was greater. There was some hope for restarting migration.

Official pre-depression immigration schemes were based on the romantic view of group land colonisation. But such development required Dominion capital outlay for transport and accommodation, and clearly these proposals no longer interested the New Zealand government. The British government had in 1929 established a colonial development fund of £1 million to "promote colonial economic development, and trade with the United Kingdom". After Savage's visit in 1937 the Dominions Office prepared an in-depth report on classes of potential migrants and a selection process, and conducted a survey of various British districts for "migration-mindedness".⁶² The Overseas Settlement Board prepared a similar report, recommending that emigration needed to be thoroughly planned, highly selective, and well-administered with

Labour: correspondence and press clippings on general situation (May 1939- July 1941); Meeting between the Overseas Settlement Board and Savage, 17 June 1937 in A.J.C.P.5406:666, M2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners. Lord Bledisloe suggested to the O.S.B. that the British Government make investments into secondary industry, to stimulate growth, 20 April 1937, in Ibid.

⁶¹ 24th Meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 17 February 1937 in *ibid*.

⁶² Ministry of Labour to Dominions Office, October 1937 in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/9, New Zealand migration policy: general.

good aftercare.⁶³ The Dominions Office gave serious consideration to improving the information and services given to people considering migration to other parts of the Empire. In September 1938, a member of the Office recommended an enlargement of the old information bureau at the Oversea Settlement Board (O.S.B) for the purpose of Empire publicity and information for prospective migrants.⁶⁴ Consideration was also given to the improvement of postal communications, and broadcasting and their value to the promotion of migration, and it was agreed that some financial assistance for travel arrangements should be given to workers visiting the Dominions.⁶⁵ After further discussion the suggestion was declined. In April 1939, a member of the O. S. B., George Gibson, made the campaign a public one when he gave an interview to the B B C promoting the need for more Empire migration.⁶⁶

Unofficial groups promoting the extension of migration to the dominions also began to appear in the United Kingdom from the late 1930s.⁶⁷ In October 1937 an Empire Migration and Development Conference was held which was supported by various county and town migration committee as well as the Catholic Emigration Society, the Salvation Army and the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women. Among its patrons were L. S. Amery, MP, Lord Bledisloe, the former Governor-General of New Zealand, and representatives of various charitable organisations and industrial associations.⁶⁸ The conference was not an official one, so it was not attended by Ministers or government officials. Lord Bledisloe himself may also have contributed to the

⁶³ O. S. B. Memo, 14 April 1937, in A.J.C.P.5406:667, M2/11 (part 1) Overseas Settlement Board: background papers circulated.

⁶⁴ Crutchley to Sir Eric Machtig, 1 September 1938 in A.J.C.P.5426:718, M579/1, Empire publicity in relation to migration. The result of the suggestion is unknown.

⁶⁵ Meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 28 November 1938, in *ibid.*

⁶⁶ R. W. MacKay and G. Gibson, "Peopling the Empire," *The Listener*, 20 April 1939 in *ibid.*

⁶⁷ For example the standing committee of the Newcastle Empire Voluntary Migration Conference was formed in June 1937. Following this trend the Royal Empire Society held a conference on Imperial Development.

⁶⁸ Empire Migration and Development Conference Programme, in A.J.C.P.5425:715, M567/2-20, Unofficial migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference 1937: Empire Development Council.

confusion surrounding whether New Zealand wanted British migrants. For on his return to Britain he embarked upon an ambitious lecture circuit representing a number of New Zealand organisations and promoting the need for "UK brains and capital" in New Zealand.⁶⁹ While the approach did not represent the official New Zealand government view, it was certainly in line with the concerns of interest groups in New Zealand, as will be illustrated later. On at least one other occasion an interest group in Britain advised a similar group in New Zealand to approach the New Zealand government regarding support for migration.⁷⁰

After the Conference, a deputation from the Empire Migration Conference approached the UK government to request that they take the initiative in restarting Dominion migration but the suggestion was declined because the reinstatement of migration schemes would not necessarily be beneficial to Britain and the Dominions themselves had yet to show any enthusiasm for the prospect.⁷¹ Eventually however after a second conference in Scotland, the Empire Development Council was formed and met in the House of Commons.

The British government respected the dominions' ability to make their own external policy decisions including the issue of immigration. But individually members of the Dominions Office and the O. S. B. expressed confusion over the reticence to restart immigration in the late 1930s, as did the various conferences and interest groups. In actuality, British agencies were powerless to press the matter without some initiative from the Dominion governments. In its 1937 report the O. S. B. upheld the view expressed by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration policy.

⁶⁹ Report on Empire Migration and Development Conference, 18/10/37, in *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Women's Division Federated Farmers, Minutes, Wednesday 18 June 1930.- The W. D. F. F. received correspondence from the secretary of the Migration Bureau, Overseas League, London, drawing their attention to the League's scheme for sending them to New Zealand and asking them to get in touch with the government with regard to their placement.

⁷¹ The Prime Minister's reply to the Deputation, 23 November 1937, in A.J.C.P.5425:715, M567/8 in Unofficial migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference 1937: Empire Development Council.

There has been a tendency, which has grown stronger in recent years, to regard the acceptance by the Dominions of migrants as being, from the United Kingdom point of view, a duty which the Dominions owe to the Mother Country and from the Dominion point of view as a form of assistance which they are prepared, not without hesitation and even reluctance, to extend to the Mother Country if it can be done without detriment to themselves. We do not believe that there is any justification for such an attitude of mind and we are certain that it is seriously detrimental to the prospect of a successful policy of assisted migration. In our view, the Government of the United Kingdom should not afford assistance to persons to migrate overseas unless the Governments of the Dominions express themselves as anxious to receive the migrants and ready to join in making all the necessary arrangements to give their settlement a real prospect of success.⁷²

However, the O. S. B. also believed that by 1937 the stalling of immigration schemes justified by unemployment was no longer relevant, as pressure in Britain favoured Empire migration;

... we are constantly met with the contention that so long as unemployment exists in the Dominions it is impossible to contemplate the encouragement of further migration. We cannot accept this as a general principle, since the matter is clearly one of degree.⁷³

From 1937 there was a noticeable change in public opinion in New Zealand. Several high profile citizens and groups took up the pro-immigration mantle. Most notable were self employed businessmen and rural-based groups who did not subscribe to the theory that an increase in immigrants would cause a decrease in the standard of living.⁷⁴ The depression had shown New Zealand business just how dependent it was on overseas markets. An increase in population could extend the home markets and lessen this dependence.⁷⁵ Wellingtonian C. E. Littlejohn proposed to expand British industry in Canada and solve the problem of British unemployment by organised immigration there. While New Zealand treasury officials agreed that the scheme was in principle "quite sound", the matter was thought to be one for the British

⁷²Report of the Overseas Settlement Board, 1937, p.10, in A.J.C.P.5407:670. M4 (PQ) 4, Overseas Settlement Board: reports on work: parliamentary questions.

⁷³ Report of the O. S. B., p.9 in *ibid*.

⁷⁴ Similarly in Britain, various individuals championed the renewal of assisted immigration. In 1937 representatives of the Y. M. C. A and the Salvation Army requested financial backing and official recognition of trips to encourage the Dominion Government to take migrants. See A.J.C.P.5420:704, M486/1-27. Young Men's Christian Association migration work: general: activities of Major Bavin.

⁷⁵ N.Z.P.D., Vol.248, September 16, 1937, p.118. M. P. Vincent Ward.

government.⁷⁶ Presumably Mr Littlejohn believed that the New Zealand Government was as vitally interested as he in the development of Empire migration. However at least one other commentator, P. H. N. Freeth, the Editor of the *Christchurch Press*, attacked the Government and the labour movement for not restarting immigration;

And there is now no obstacle to a resumption of migration except the selfish exclusiveness of a few trade unions which have, unfortunately, an influence with the Government out of all proportion to their importance. It is a clear case of sectional interest versus national interest.⁷⁷

Dunedin businessman and philanthropist Sir Percy Sargood capitalised on a personal friendship when he wrote directly to British Secretary of State Malcolm Macdonald recommending an organised redistribution of one million people from Great Britain to New Zealand over a ten year period to be financed by funds redirected from unemployment grants, poor laws and other "Charitable Avenues".⁷⁸ Sargood was a liberal imperialist, believing in the benefits of civilisation that the Empire could bring.⁷⁹ As was common in these situations, the Dominions Office read the proposal but declined serious consideration on the grounds that the matter was between the Dominion Government and themselves.

Another notable was Auckland solicitor J. D. McMillan who "together with a band of enthusiastic men," had been allegedly developing a campaign for the adoption of principles set out in a book, "Reconstruction."⁸⁰ Together with Messrs Crimp, Griffiths, and Pike he was also the director of Everymans Publications Limited which published a monthly magazine called *The Monocle*

⁷⁶ Memorandum for the Prime Minister, 6 August 1930, No.T.52/630, in T1 52/630, Imperial Economic Conference 1931, National Archives.

⁷⁷ The Press, Editorial, 2 November 1937, p.3.

⁷⁸ Sargood to MacDonald, in A.J.C.P.5423:711. M558/17-82, New Zealand: miscellaneous representations: policy paper: individual cases.

⁷⁹ J. McAloon, "Sargood, Percy Rolfe," in C. Orange (ed) Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Vol. III, 1901-1920, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1996), p.459.

⁸⁰ Report by H. B. Donaldson on the Empire Development Council, May 29, 1939, in A.J.C.P.5425:716. Unofficial migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference 1937: Empire Development Council. I have been unsuccessful in attempting to locate a copy of this book.

which in August 1938 printed a campaign allegedly inspired by opposition to the government.⁸¹ The article asserted that it was the responsibility of private enterprise to solve the problem of unemployment and this would in turn dispense with the need for Government in business. By 1939 McMillan signified his interest in setting up a National Development Council in New Zealand responsive to an Empire Development Council in London. The National Development Council was envisaged as promoting enterprise in the colonies and thus providing a stimulus for the revival of industry, commerce and eventually, migration. In fact, McMillan's organisation had been incorporated as a public company in March 1934 and by 1939 operated as three separate companies, including a corporation of underwriters. Furthermore, McMillan claimed that the venture had the support of the Unemployment Board, the Associated Banks and the Stock Exchange Association of New Zealand.⁸² However, further investigation by the O. S. B. revealed that the Information Section of the Prime Minister's Department in New Zealand regarded the campaign at the time as a political stunt during election time.⁸³

Another group, the Dominion Settlement Association, was urging for the "desirability of immediate action" of a "selective policy of immigration" in 1936.⁸⁴ The Association, which represented a large number of business groups and non profit organisations such as New Zealand Federated Farmers and the Victoria League, visited the Prime Minister's office in September 1936 requesting a declaration of policy and a commission to consider the possibility of "absorption" of migrants.⁸⁵ No reply was forthcoming. The Association had been formed in 1925 after an invitation to a number of associations by the

⁸¹ Batterbee, High Commissioner in Wellington, to Machtig, 10 August 1939 in *ibid*.

⁸² Report by Donaldson.

⁸³ Batterbee to Machtig.

⁸⁴ Letter from the Palmerston North Chamber of Commerce, to the Prime Minister, 13 May 1936, Order of the House, 11 August, 1936. L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state-aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. National Archives.

⁸⁵ Letter to the Prime Minister from the Dominion Settlement Association, 19 October 1938 in L1, 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association, 1936-55, National Archives.

Wellington Chamber of Commerce to attend a conference on migration, and since then had been active in promoting migration. They organised representative gatherings to discuss migration with Amery and MacDonald on their visits to New Zealand and also organised the submissions to the Empire Migration and Development Conference from Lord Bledisloe in February 1938.⁸⁶ They were represented at a conference in Glasgow in 1938, of which there are no details available, and maintained contact with the Empire Migration Settlement Group and the Development and Settlement Research Committee. Furthermore, a national association of groups which included the Dominion Settlement Association gained publicity in Britain for their campaign, when the Daily Express proclaimed the existence of a strong interest in immigrants;

Twenty-one (sic) national organisations claiming 100,000 members have cabled a united appeal to Mr James Savage (sic.), the Premier who is now in England for the Coronation, to negotiate with the British Government for a financial and large-scale emigration plan to come into operation at an early date.⁸⁷

The Association also reiterated these requests when it led a deputation to the New Zealand Government in February 1938. Mr Leigh Hunt advocated British organised and financed migration;

... we do not want any resumption of the haphazard migration of years gone past, because it has caused great hardship to the emigrant and been of little use to this country. We want men and women, boys and girls, British capital and expert brains to start new industries and develop those that we have now with the greatest speed.⁸⁸

Peter Fraser, representing the Prime Minister, and Tim Armstrong, the Minister for Immigration, were sympathetic to the deputation but made no

⁸⁶ Dispatch on the Dominion Settlement Association, 29 September 1939 in A.J.C.P.5416:695, M345/1, New Zealand: Fairbridge Farm School: offer of farm at Tutira.

⁸⁷ "Want Immigrants" A Lost Horizon. Emigration and Development in A.J.C.P.5425:711, M567/6 Unofficial migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference 1937: Empire Development Council. In a report on a deputation to the Prime Minister, the group claimed to represent 24 organisations, which allegedly equalled about "about 100,000 members". See Report on deputation to the Prime Minister, 21/2/1938 in L1, 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association, 1936-55.

⁸⁸ A.J.C.P.5425:711, M567/6. Unofficial migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference 1937: Empire Development Council.

promises regarding official consideration of migration or an immigration policy.⁸⁹ The attitude was not entirely non-committal, for the Prime Minister had been unwell and unable to undertake official duties. Again the deputation received no reply. In January 1939, in-house discussion revealed that a Committee including Armstrong and Paddy Webb, the Minister of Labour, was considering Immigration policy and was expected to report to Cabinet soon.⁹⁰

Another prominent citizen, A. F. Castle, entertained a keen interest in the development of an accelerated immigration scheme from the early 1930s, and in doing so, created one of New Zealand's more famous pro-immigration interest groups, the Five Million Club. The Five Million Club envisioned immigration as a form of insurance against a low birth rate, and as an economic defence to develop industry. It advocated the transplantation of assimilable foreigners rather than Britons for a number of reasons, and phrased these in a language of national purity. If immigration were to involve a transference of British subjects to New Zealand there would not be a gain in "manpower" in the Empire, which was desirable. It was also believed that because of the high percentage of British migrants already in the Dominion, the population could stand such a "watering down". Furthermore the "types" of migrants most needed in New Zealand were the very type that the Mother Country could least afford to lose.⁹¹ On his return from England in 1933, A. F. Castle had approached several newspapers nationwide with a number of articles discussing the various aspects of the problem of population. These attracted a great deal of correspondence, and were still appearing in various newspapers four years later. Castle also wrote to the O. S. B. in London with a scheme to encourage U. K. settlement.⁹² Because of a lack of official migration policy, all

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ W. E. Barnard to Savage, 26 January 1939, Labour Department files, L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. National Archives.

⁹¹ For discussion of the Five Million Club's involvement in non-British schemes, see chapter seven.

⁹² Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 22 January 1937 in A.J.C.P.5406:666, M2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High

activity was of an unofficial nature despite the high profile of some of its members.

Castle managed to gain the attention of W. E. Barnard, a prominent Labour MP who was then the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Barnard had been a member of Parliament since 1928, and while at the outset of Labour's term in office he had been a supporter of Prime Minister Savage, he eventually allied himself with the disillusioned John A. Lee, and became one of the leaders of the dissident group in caucus.⁹³ Barnard was clearly at odds with the policies of some of his colleagues, and was an ideal choice for the leadership of a high profile pressure group. Together Castle and Barnard formed the voluntary "non political" body known as the New Zealand Five Million Club, with Barnard in the role of President.

Throughout 1937 Barnard travelled around the country talking to people and encouraging them to join the Five Million Club.⁹⁴ By mid 1937 the Club had thirty branches throughout the country and had held its first national conference. Castle was confident in the prospects for the appeal;

This conference was the first of its kind to be held in New Zealand and was attended by people representing all shades of political opinion and all walks of life. An increasing number of public bodies such as the New Zealand Manufacturers Association, the Employers Federation, the Associated Chambers of Commerce, and the Federation of Labour are becoming members of the Five Million Club. Indeed I confidently anticipate that by the time Parliament re-assembles in August next that the numerical strength of this organisation will be sufficient to impel government action.⁹⁵

While numbers of supporters is unknown, the strength the group was increasing. The Five Million Club's popularity was a side-effect of its campaign to educate the public on the connection between population and economic and social problems. Without a great deal of difficulty it was able to set up two

Commissioners.

⁹³ B. Gustafson, *From the Cradle to the Grave: a biography of Michael Joseph Savage*, (Auckland, Reed Methuen Ltd., 1986), pp.143, 17, 200, 225, 234-5.,

⁹⁴ *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol.248, September 24, 1937, p.367.

⁹⁵ Castle to Lord Elton, 15 June 1937 in A. J. C. P.5416:694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

national research committees investigating the decline in the birth-rate and the possibilities for migration. It was hoped that the evidence from the committees would force the appointment of a Royal Commission. Their findings were somewhat mixed, but they believed that while general opinion was vague, the public were in favour of an early resumption of migration;

Our experience has been that the majority of people are unwilling to discuss the subject on the grounds that they do not know sufficient about it. Where we have found a willingness to discuss the matter we have also found the greatest confusion of thought on the subject. This general lack of understanding of the principles of immigration have been a severe handicap to our efforts to obtain a consensus of public opinion on the question.

Nevertheless, we are confident that there exists a large and increasing body of public opinion that believes something should be done to increase the population of New Zealand at a faster rate than is possible with the present declining birth-rate. But the impression gained is that people feel that since immigration is a national question it is the duty of the Government to take whatever steps are deemed necessary.⁹⁶

Several Members of Parliament who were also members of the Five Million Club, were "schooled in this propaganda" so that they would be in an advantageous position when the matter came before the House of Representatives. Concern that the issue should be brought up at the 1937 Imperial Conference was also voiced in a cable to the Prime Minister supported by over 100,000 people. According to Castle, this received "full publicity in the New Zealand press."⁹⁷ Importantly however, an Imperial ear was also bent towards the Five Million Club. Castle's suggestion of vocational training for men leaving the Army to make them suitable for resettlement was seriously considered by the Dominions Office in London.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ New Zealand Five Million Club, Report of Migration Committee in folder M326/22 in *ibid*.

⁹⁷ Castle to Lord Elton. In actual fact, while the 1937 Conference migration was predicted in New Zealand and in Britain to be a point for consideration, it was never discussed. See Report of the Overseas Settlement Board, April 1937, in A.J.C.P.5407:670, M5 (PQ) 4, Overseas Settlement Board: reports on work: Parliamentary questions; Letter to the Prime Minister from the Dominion Settlement Association, 19 October 1938 in L1, 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association 1936-55, National Archives.

⁹⁸ Letter from C. R. Price to Mr Besso, Ministry of Labour, July 1937 in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/5 New Zealand migration policy: general. There is no evidence to suggest that the matter was taken any further.

Ultimately, however, the Five Million Club remained a toothless tiger in the arena of actual immigration activism. While raising public awareness, the organisation lacked the financial power to put any of its schemes into practise, and was forced on at least one occasion to approach the British Government suggesting a renewal of assistance despite an apparent lack of reciprocal assistance by the New Zealand Government.⁹⁹ Like all the other schemes to solve unemployment and rural labour shortages through immigration, none of its plans were actually adopted. Nevertheless, the concern of these individuals and of others did succeed in keeping the issue alive in the Dominions Office and in parliament.¹⁰⁰

Most politicians, however, were preoccupied with building the economy rather than increasing the labour base. The Government's answer to the problem of strengthening the sterling resources of the New Zealand Reserve Bank was to control imports and exports by means of a licensing system, and to increase local production of consumable commodities through greater utilisation of land and extension of manufacturing.¹⁰¹ The call for increased productivity had been supported by Mr J. E. Emlyn-Jones, a visiting Welsh delegate to the Chambers of Commerce Congress in October 1936, a point that was noted with interest in *The Dominion* newspaper.¹⁰² The Welshman's viewpoint was wholeheartedly supported by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire. 1936 had been marked by a great deal of activity in trade, some of which was anticipatory buying by private individuals as well as buyers.¹⁰³ Buoyed by this support, the New Zealand government,

⁹⁹ Castle to Miss Edith Thompson, 6 March, 1939 in folder M326/22 in *ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ For other deputations and personal suggestions, see L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. National Archives.

¹⁰¹ Governor-General, New Zealand to H M Government, 19 November 1938 in A.J.C.P.5416:694. M326/1-54 New Zealand migration policy: general. The Five Million Club advocated this extension of industrial production.

¹⁰² Excerpt from the *Dominion*, 7 October 1936, L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. National Archives.

¹⁰³ O.S.B. Memo 99, Extracts from a report by the United Kingdom Trade Commissioner, Wellington, 14 January 1937 in A.J.C.P.5406:667, M2/11 (part 1) Overseas Settlement Board: background papers circulated.

through its Trade Commissioner, invited certain manufacturing industries in Britain to cooperate in establishing industries in return for a "sufficient" share of the market.¹⁰⁴ The Labour Government also began to acknowledge a shortage of skilled labour in its developing secondary industries.¹⁰⁵ The Government took steps to recruit a certain number of skilled operatives through the British Trades Union organisation. It had been assumed that the development of secondary industries would be done in collaboration with British firms, but this was an assumption that should not necessarily have been made.

There were in fact serious problems afoot. Labour's policies resulted in an exchange crisis in 1938 where the government was unable to finance all the imports demanded. In this situation the Government chose to insulate employment levels from the international economy. In the 1930s insulation, or economic nationalism, was debated mainly in terms of 'guaranteed prices' for dairy farmers. But the policy's main goal was in fact full employment regardless of the export receipts.¹⁰⁶ Farming could not supply the number of jobs needed to fulfil this and in fact technical advances were diminishing the need for labour in the farming industry. The logical step was to industrialise, developing industries protected by import licensing and exchange controls, that would ideally substitute imports.

This trend towards economic nationalism was not unique in the post World War One period, and was a symptomatic response to international changes.¹⁰⁷ Restrictions imposed on United States immigration caused population pressure in some European countries, and there came to exist an international demand

¹⁰⁴ Since 1907 the self-governing dominions had each been appointed official commercial representatives of the United Kingdom.

¹⁰⁵ Interview between Dr. Harrop and H. T. Armstrong, London, 21 July 1937, L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. National Archives.

¹⁰⁶ Hawke, The Evolution, p.13.

¹⁰⁷ Oversea Settlement Board, Revised Draft of the Memorandum of the Oversea Settlement Board to the Secretary of State, 2 April 1937, p.4, in A.J.C.P.5420:705. M523/1-2, Juvenile migration: general. I suggest in chapter seven, that by the mid to late thirties, the actions may have been in anticipation of war.

for more raw materials and new lands for settlement. A vague and exaggerated conception also existed of vast unoccupied tracts of land in the British Empire which could be easily and profitably cultivated. While to some extent this was true, as the Dominions were capable of sustaining larger populations, it caused a defensiveness amongst Dominion Governments. Both Australia and Canada were embarking on agricultural and industrial expansion, and South Africa was developing its agricultural industries.

The new policy invoked concern in Britain in December 1938, over the Dominion's ability to maintain exports at previous levels. The incoming High Commissioner for New Zealand, Sir Harry Batterbee, was enlisted to follow the matter closely and put forward his recommendations to the Secretary of State. The O. S. B. was concerned that the new policy of expanding and developing secondary industries would cause discrimination against imports from Britain, and therefore urged its Government not to assist through economic contribution or the facilitation of migration of industrial workers;

the uneconomic expansion of secondary industries in New Zealand to the detriment of the United Kingdom's own manufacturing and exporting interests, nor would it be right to do so in the interests of the would be migrants themselves, in view of the problematical results of the policy.¹⁰⁸

By the August 1939 budget, the New Zealand government was claiming to have virtually abolished unemployment and accordingly, cuts were made to the Employment Promotion fund which had been generated from a wage levy with a view to transferring funds to primary and secondary industry.¹⁰⁹ Significantly, however, New Zealand manufacturers were experiencing a shortage of skilled young labour in local industries, and some thought was given to government subsidisation of adult apprenticeships to various trades,

¹⁰⁸ The 48th meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 7 December 1938 in A.J.C.P.5406:666. M2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: background papers circulated.

¹⁰⁹ Sir Harry Batterbee, High Commissioner in Wellington, to Sir Thomas Inskip, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 18 May 1939 in A.J.C.P.5531:957, Z88/8, New Zealand: unemployment: 1938-39 report of department of Labour: correspondence and press clippings on general situation (May 1939- July 1941).

in order to stimulate production¹¹⁰ By early 1939 there was an urgent political necessity for the Government to show some results from their State Housing scheme which was also suffering from a shortage of labour.¹¹¹ The rising cost of land values had impacted upon the overall cost of the houses. In addition the housing construction branch ran into problems over the shortage of materials and labour, because both the government development project and the private sector were competing for the same labour.¹¹² The manufacturers readily accepted the plan for government subsidisation of the adult apprentice wages, because not many industries were able to pay the high rate of wages for training periods which had been established by the government. However, the success of the overall scheme was necessarily dependent on the ability of the Minister of Finance, Walter Nash, to raise large loans while in Britain, and to October 1939, the numbers of men benefiting from the scheme were very small.¹¹³ The only other alternative was to find the necessary labour from overseas.

The Minister of Labour, Paddy Webb, viewed the importation of labour from overseas as a mistake, as he believed the jobs could be done by New Zealanders, and the Minister of Housing, Tim Armstrong was responsible for the recruitment of building operatives overseas.¹¹⁴ In June of the same year the superintendent of workshops, Mr E. T. Spidy, was sent to Sydney to employ 100 Australian skilled workers to improve the situation. This was not without precedent. In the 1920s New Zealand businesses had advertised in British newspapers for workers, and agents had been sent to recruit them.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Daily Telegraph, 6 June 1939 in folder z88/8 in *ibid*.

¹¹¹ Boyd Shannon to Garnett, 20 March 1939, in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/26, New Zealand migration policy: general.

¹¹² Ferguson, p.127.

¹¹³ In the two years since the schemes inception, only 438 men were employed.

¹¹⁴ Batterbee to Sir Thomas Inskip, in A.J.C.P.5531:957, Z88/8.

¹¹⁵ Article on Jock Mathison's recruitment for the Kaiapoi Woollen Mills in 1923. The Press, 22 September 1977. The £24 fare was paid by the company, and taken from his wages at £1 a week; Correspondence from Derek Rogers, 25 July 1995, suggests that his family was recruited in Blaenavon, Wales by agents of the Westport Coal Company.

The only alternatives to producing more goods was either the importation of more goods, or the importation of more labour, of which import restrictions disposed of the first alternative.

By March 1939, 219 artisans had come from Australia on assisted passages.¹¹⁶ Officials were considering other options; in July government officials met with the Netherlands Vice-Consul to discuss a "trial shipment" of five carpenters, and the prospect of the immigration of more skilled Dutch craftsmen.¹¹⁷ A call had been made in February 1939 to British Trade Unions and the Dominions Office for five hundred building trade workers to migrate to meet the acute housing shortage.¹¹⁸ Interestingly, some twenty years earlier the need for housing to accommodate newcomers had fallen similarly short and an invitation had been given for skilled tradesmen to emigrate.¹¹⁹ The prospective workers were to be not older than forty years and "first class tradesmen and fast workers", as such men could make "good money and permanent homes" in the Dominion.¹²⁰

In 1939 the New Zealand Government was more specific in its instructions. The building operatives were to be guaranteed employment for two years and the cost of their passage advanced to them, to be repaid out of the first year's wages. They were preferably to be young, single men, because of a shortage in accommodation. The men were to be excellent tradesmen and fast workers and if they proved "satisfactory" the Government would "be able to take many more". Interestingly, the Government was careful to avoid the appearance of a resumption of immigration. They did not propose to use the Assisted Passages agreement, and passports were not required, as the High Commissioner issued

¹¹⁶ Boyd Shannon, High Commission, Wellington to Garnett, Dominions Office, 20 March 1939 in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/26, New Zealand migration policy: general.

¹¹⁷ Notes of the meeting, 24 July 1939, as forwarded to Sir Thomas Inskip, in *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ C.R. Price to F. Sandford, 23 February 1939 M326/19 in *ibid.*; High Commissioner for New Zealand to the Under-secretary for State, Dominions Office, 28 February 1939, A.J.C.P.5407:669, M4/4-18, Overseas Settlement Board: information requested on unemployment statistics: settlement aid to immigrants, emigrants.

¹¹⁹ *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol.185, October 1919, p.484.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

free travel permits for the individuals involved.¹²¹ However in early 1939 there was no response.

In desperation the Labour Department adopted the practise of sending its employees aboard all recently-arrived vessels to make contact with prospective workers. This was done, it was claimed, in order to inform immigrants of the work available, and to make sure that they obtain the kind of work most likely to contribute to the common good of the country, however Mr Batterbee was sceptical, preferring his own explanation;

. . . the acute shortage of skilled labour, the competition between the State and private employers for what labour there is, and the urgent political necessity for the Government to show some results from their State Housing scheme incline me to interpret the second part of this explanation as meaning that the State is trying to get first pick of any immigrant labour.¹²²

By October 1939, the 500 building trades people had arrived. However, unlike the call for workers in 1919, this did not herald the start of a new period of migration, but rather, the start of World War Two. Regardless, there was no indication of any desire to re-start mass assisted migration. In fact immigration in general was not exactly encouraged. In October the High Commission in Wellington was still urging its correspondents not to emigrate until a greater number of houses were available.¹²³

Essentially, then, the shortage of accommodation was not a new problem, but one that had been minimised in the early post war years. While anxious to demonstrate their independence, New Zealand and the other Dominions had previously enjoyed extensive investment of both capital and population from Britain; a situation which New Zealand at least, was in no hurry to change. The

¹²¹ Ibid; O.S.B Memorandum 203, 23 March 1939 in A.J.C.P.5407:669, M4/4-18, Overseas Settlement Board: information requested on unemployment statistics: settlement aid to immigrants, emigrants.

¹²² Mr Boyd Shannon to Garnett, 20 March 1939, M326/26, in A.J.C.P.5416:694. M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

¹²³ Batterbee to Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 5 October 1939 in A.J.C.P.5531:957, Z88/12, New Zealand: unemployment: 1938-39 report of department of Labour: correspondence and press clippings on general situation (May 1939- July 1941).; Letter to Batterbee, December 1939 in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/53, New Zealand migration policy: general.

1922 passage agreement in particular afforded the New Zealand Government the right to set the "types" of immigrants it needed with minimal financial commitment, and as economic conditions worsened, the restrictions became tighter.

The hesitant and spasmodic character of immigration policy and debate has a larger context. One of the many conditions required by an industrialised society was cultural homogeneity, over which there has been some discussion by political scientists.¹²⁴ The occurrence of nationalism within the community met this need because it created a sense of belonging and solidarity among co-inhabitants; in the aftermath of the depression a sense of camaraderie was felt amongst New Zealand residents. Nationalism is both a kind of behaviour and an ideology, for while this behaviour is learned from environment. It is also in part derived from instinct.¹²⁵ "Official nationalism" focuses patriotic pride on the state, and the nationalistic state requires certain conditions; centralised power, a group or body of people with enough commonalities to consider itself a unit, and a body of beliefs which we can call nationalist ideologies.¹²⁶ Above all, nationalism seeks to defend and promote the interests of the nation, and the best way to ensure this is to have a consensus of interests among individual members of the community. The enforcement of social order is not dispersed evenly throughout the society but is held in concentrated areas among some members of the society, and is regulated by a well-centralised state which dominates all legitimate culture. However, as the state's authority depends on mobility and communication between individuals, it is dependent on the majority of them having been socialised into the same culture, and thus having developed an emotional attachment to the state. Arguably, then, the

¹²⁴ E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford, Basil Blacklock Ltd., 1988), p.39

¹²⁵ J. G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, (London, MacMillan Educational Ltd., 1991), p.20

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.4.

depression gave legitimacy to not only the policy of economic nationalism but also to the Labour government.

Fundamentally there has been a conception that crisis is a unifying factor for a nation. However, when the issue is economy-based and concerns an agricultural-based economy experimenting with the politics of Labour in a period of economic recovery, the post-crisis is less unifying. The economic nationalism practised by New Zealand and other small nations in the post depression years sent a clear message to outside interests. While the smaller countries had reputations for being primary-producing nations with populations outside interests saw as below capacity, they were putting their own interests before Empire concerns. To some extent this self-prioritisation backfired on the New Zealand government. While they guarded the right to restart immigration when they chose and represent themselves at an international level, and were unresponsive to suggestions from the Overseas Settlement Board and the Dominions Office, they still expected that Britain could supply the shortfall of artisans required, at short notice and fund large loans. The issue of immigration could not be entirely separate from the invigoration of developing industry and certain groups, primarily in rural industries, and in business, recognised that if employment could be protected then fears could be neutralised. The New Zealand Government learnt through experience that it is very difficult to "order" workers, like an import of certain job types. The most likely explanation, however, for the Government's sluggish response to restarting mass migration was the knowledge that it would require financial assistance which they were unable to afford. Ironically, the cheapest form of immigration for the Government, would have been unrestricted, but emerging nationalist priorities precluded it.

PART I

Chapter two: Britishness and the politics of desirability; explaining the culture.

There can be no argument that historically New Zealand, first as a colony and then as a dominion, has had a very close relationship with Britain. In the interwar period this relationship entailed a certain amount of interdependence, and this could be characterised by what was commonly known as Empire migration. From 1918, the Overseas Settlement Committee kept in close touch with the High Commissioner in New Zealand and the Agent-General in London. In 1921, a conference to discuss plans for overseas settlement was held at the Colonial Office in London, attended by representatives of the British, Canadian and New Zealand governments. The aim was to find a way of increasing the permanent development and resources of the Empire so as to create markets within it.¹ Those who attended laid down the conditions for the Empire Settlement Act 1922. They agreed that the governments of Britain and the Dominions should cooperate to create a policy of assisted migration, and that financial assistance should be afforded to approved settlers through overseas governments or approved private organisations. Under the resulting Act, the British government, and those of the Dominions, entered individually into agreements to assist the passages of selected migrants on a fifty-fifty basis, on the understanding that the result would be beneficial to both parties. The passage agreement also provided loans for migrants if nominated individuals could not pay the cost of a six-berth passage. Throughout the interwar period it was generally agreed by both New Zealand and British policy makers, that if there was to be immigration to New Zealand, then it should be British, in

¹ W.D. Borrie, Immigration to New Zealand, 1854-1938, (Canberra, Australian National University, 1991), p.161.

preference to migrants from elsewhere.² This chapter attempts to examine the notions behind, and the nature of, this immigration commitment.

From both sides of the discussion, there was a pressing need to establish a common bond which would overshadow the geographical distance between Britain and its Empire. This factor did not go unnoticed by pro-immigration groups. The Salvation Army, for example, made much of the shared history enjoyed by all parts of the British empire, and the enduring bond that this entailed;

It is axiomatic that the Empire is One Great Family. Though separated by thousands of miles, we are brothers and sisters, cherishing the loftiest ideal, however expressed, and our modes of living are substantially the same, though differing in circumstances. . . Will not the family tie be strengthened by seizing the present opportunity to ensure the future welfare of our unemployed brothers and sisters at home by their transference overseas? There can be but one answer.³

After 150 years of industrialisation, British society had inherent problems relating to unemployment, overcrowding and the potential for mass unrest. The situation was latently unstable and the answer was clearly seen to be immigration. New Zealand and Britain had a common bond, but one might well wonder why was there a necessity for it to be constantly reinvigorated by a flow of migrants. The answer on the part of Britain was partly fear-based. In order to consolidate the British position in the Dominions, larger numbers were needed. As the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald, was to put it in 1937, "Canada, Australia and New Zealand are, comparatively speaking, undeveloped countries. If we do not develop them, somebody else will develop them."⁴

² N.Z.P.D. Vol. 206, 22 July 1925, p.688; Debate on the Empire Settlement Bill, 25 January 1937 in Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vols.317-327, , col.595ff.

³ Salvation Army, Empire Migration and Settlement, 1937, in A. J. C. P.5418;700, M458/1-73, Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women: staff; policy; finances; activities; statistics; publicity.

⁴ Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 25 January 1937 in Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 317-327, col.595.

Another contribution to the migration movement was made in New Zealand and in Britain, by a "pseudo-demographic myth - the 'overpopulation' of Britain."⁵ This belief was based on the obvious - that Britain had a more dense population than the colonies - and assumed that it was desirable to redistribute population. This is seen in the increase in immigration between 1922 and 1926 of assisted migrants from the United Kingdom, if not earlier in nineteenth century Wakefieldian systematic colonisation. New Zealand citizens had heard of the problems of Britain, and considered them within the dynamics of the British class system;

The colonial learns much about the Homeland's huge industrial development. He knows that Britain manufactures for the world; he has seen pictures and read descriptions of her packed streets; and he may have been told by friend or relative or immigrant how different is a working class quarter in London or Birmingham from a section of his own city, . . . He does not need to be a sociologist to know something of the hideous record of Victorian industrialism in the creation of slums.⁶

Further consideration of the assisted immigration programme indicated the biases and conceptions of migrants held by New Zealand policy-makers. From 1905, immigration was regulated by a form of assistance which was eventually known as the nomination system.⁷ The nomination scheme applied exclusively to residents in the United Kingdom and individuals were nominated for assistance by near relatives, and later by businesses, in New Zealand.⁸ Nomination allowed intending immigrants a reduction in passage

⁵ Drummond, p.134; Report of the Overseas Settlement Board 1937 in A.J.C.P. 5407: 670. M5 (PQ) 4 Overseas Settlement Board: reports on work: Parliamentary questions. In fact, by the late 1930s the desire by Britain to export some of its human wealth to the Dominions was motivated more by a desire for Empire unity and was in fact uneconomic in terms of loss of British-trained skills.

⁶ A. Mulgan, *Home*, p.83.

⁷ Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, *A.J.H.R.* D-9, 1905, p.3.

⁸ There is some suggestion that the capital of applying immigrants was taken into account. Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, *A.J.H.R.* D-9, 1917. Furthermore, the nomination scheme was somewhat prohibitive. While citizens and businesses of the Dominion were able to nominate for assisted passages from 1921, any person residing in the United Kingdom who did not fall within the definitions of a prohibited immigrant, there was an inherent obligation for them to take responsibility for these migrants.

money for second or third class travel on particular shipping lines and if necessary

Table 2: The effect of economic assistance on immigration.

years	Number of assisted immigrants	Total number of immigrants intending permanent residence	Number of assisted immigrants as percentage of total immigrants intending permanent residence
1921	7501	11135	67.4%
1922	7768	13845	56.1%
1923	6181	11762	52.6%
1924	8091	14314	56.5%
1925	8277	15704	52.7%
1926	10766	17868	60.3%
1927	5899	11327	52.1%
1928	2200	6339	34.7%
1929	1878	6343	29.6%
1930	1405	6917	20.3%
1931	489	3236	15.1%
1932	77	1572	4.9%
1934-1935	1	1579	0.1%
1935-1936	0	1917	0.0%
1936-1937	11	2807	0.4%
1937-1938	10	4341	0.2%
1938-1939	13	6493	0.2%
1939-1940	8	7315	0.1%

_ figures for 1933 are not given because a change in record-keeping by the Department of Statistics shows 1933 as a 15 month period. From 1934 onwards figures are for the year ended 31 March.

Source: New Zealand, Statistical Report on Population and Buildings 1921-1940.

accommodation and suitable employment were found for them.⁹ Assisted passages were originally funded by the New Zealand Government. However, under the Empire Settlement Act 1922, as discussed earlier, costs were met equally by the British and the New Zealand governments. The nomination system also became more detailed. Nominators were obliged to find employment for their nominees, to "maintain" them after their arrival and to

⁹ Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, A. J. H. R. D-9, 1921, p.2.

make certain that the individual stayed in New Zealand for at least five years.¹⁰ Furthermore, the penalties for misrepresentation were steep. Nominators were compelled to pay the difference between the assisted passage and the full fare. Assisted passages were also available for domestic workers and other "classes of workers" who were required in New Zealand. These individuals were selected by the High Commissioner after applying, and again the passages were only available to people of British birth and parentage.¹¹ These systems of assistance were the mainstay of immigration in the twenties, providing over half of the immigrants arriving (see table 2), and therefore maintaining the "British" majority in immigration.

Initially the preference for British migrants appears to be a simple bias for the country of origin. But as Donald Akenson has pointed out, those Pakeha peoples who were assisted to New Zealand from the British Isles, were not a single people.¹² Indeed, the people who came to New Zealand from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and other parts of the Empire were diverse, but were generally characterised as being of "British birth and parentage." This term, "British birth and parentage", is important for those it did not include. Not only were naturalised British subjects and their children excluded, but also the aboriginal natives of any British colony or dominion.¹³ Discriminatory legislation limiting entry restricted and monitored the entry of people not of "British birth and parentage". For this reason, Indians, Australian Aborigines and New Zealand Maori were classed as 'foreigners' while New Zealand British residents, Australians and Canadians could legally regard themselves as British. It was a fundamental problem for British citizens of Indian, Chinese and African ethnicity who were born within empire nations and wished to emigrate to other parts of the Empire. The empire had citizens of a multitude

¹⁰ British Overseas Settlement Delegation to New Zealand 1923, A. J. H. R., A-7, 1924, p.2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹² Akenson, pp.6-7

¹³ The immigration of non-white and non-British citizens will be discussed in part II.

of ancestries, and the use of the term "British birth and parentage" was an attempt at unification primarily along "colour" lines. For the purposes of this section, our concern is with the effects that the immigration of British citizens had on the conceptions of New Zealand British citizens, and their group identity.

A further reason for the term "British birth and parentage" for those British migrants born in the United Kingdom, arose because there was a perception of the move to New Zealand as being irreversible because of the prohibitive nature of travel expenses. This occurred despite the fact that the British government possessed funds for the repatriation of distressed British subjects. The attitude appears to have been looked upon more favourably by the New Zealand government; to 1939, only one application of repatriation was received by the New Zealand government from an expatriate Briton, to which was returned "the appropriate negative reply."¹⁴ By comparison the immigration of British people from Australia was rather less permanent. Australian migration represented a continuation of the early movement of gold diggers or others deciding to try their luck in New Zealand, and as such it possessed a large number of itinerant workers.¹⁵

In addition the passage rates available to assisted migrants indicated various age and occupational biases. The assisted passages only applied to those migrants who were selected and approved before sailing by the New Zealand government. In reality this meant that it was limited only to those whose professions were considered to be in demand, for example domestic servants or farm workers, and those with friends or relatives in New Zealand to guarantee them work and accommodation. In 1924, for example, assisted passage was offered to certain groups at reduced rates (table 3). The rates

¹⁴ Letter from Mr Boyd-Shannon, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Wellington, 13 July 1939 in A.J.C.P.5531: 957. Z84/1-23, Dominions: repatriation: reports on general procedure plus cases of repatriation of nationals of countries in Dominions.

¹⁵ See R. Arnold, "The Dynamics and Quality of Trans-Tasman Migration, 1885-1910", *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol.26 (1), March 1986, pp.1-20.

served to illustrate the more desirable groups in the migration programme for while domestic servants and children under the age of twelve could travel free, other assisted migrants still had to pay as much as £22 10 0:

Table 3: Passage rates for assisted immigrants

Third Class.	Domestics	Farm Labourers Single Men, and Married Couples without children.	Single adults 19 Years of Age and Under 50, and Married Couples without children.	Married adults accompanied by at least one child under 19 Years of age.*	Juvenile s-i.e., Boys and Girls 12 but not 17 Years of age.	Boys and Girls 17 but not 19 years of Age.†	Children under 12 Years of Age.
	(1.)	(2.)	(3.)	(4.)	(5.)	(6.)	(7.)
		Each person £ s d	Each person £ s d	Each person £ s d	Each person £ s d	Each person £ s d	Each person £ s d
Six-berth	Free..	11 0 0	16 10 0	11 0 0	free	5 10 0	free
Four-berth	Free..	13 0 0	18 10 0	13 0 0	2 0 0	7 10 0	1 0 0
Two-berth	Free..	17 0 0	22 10 0	17 0 0	6 0 0	11 10 0	3 0 0

*Also applies to a widower, or a widow, accompanied as above, or to a woman similarly accompanied proceeding to join her husband. (This rate applies only to the parent or parents.)

† Children 19 years of age and over are classified as adults (see column three for rates).

Source: Annual Report of the Department of Immigration, *A. J. H. R.*, D-9, p.2, 1924.

It has been argued that of all the Dominions, New Zealand and Australia had the most flexible systems of nomination for migration, because the occupation of the nominee was not taken into consideration, but rather the ability of the nominator and the nominee to carry out the undertaking.¹⁶ In these two countries, it was also possible for approved organisations to "nominate in bulk" by occupation type from the United Kingdom and submit their lists of recruits to the Dominion immigration officer in London. The system was convenient if nothing else. As nearly two-thirds of migrants to

¹⁶ Plant, p.89.

New Zealand went out under the nomination system, a great number in bulk, the question of flexibility through nomination accountability rather than occupational bias would appear to be a moot point.

Having identified its target groups, generally according to the most vocal demands of the community, the New Zealand government set out to tentatively attract migrants, with a great deal of help and encouragement from its counterparts in Britain. The High Commissioner's Office in London, could provide reading material and visual representations, as described by writer E. N. Bennett;

. . The young villager, conveyed by a "cheap trip" to London or some other big city, gazes upon the wonderful window-dressing of the Canadian and Australian Agencies. The sheaves of heavily eared wheat, the samples of fine fruit, the models of well-built homes and waving cornfields are all the visible signs of independence and prosperity easily within the emigrant's reach, but beyond the extremist hopes of a man who stays at home.¹⁷

New Zealand's sheer isolation, and its small population, could be represented as a possible Arcadia to those tired of overcrowded industrial Britain. Well respected public figures like Lord Bledisloe, Governor General of New Zealand from 1930 to 1935, presented the dominion to Britons in terms of its youthful possibilities as a young country. The language used outlined its eugenic potential;

There is probably no country in the world where climatic conditions are more favourable to health, physical energy and longevity than New Zealand, certainly none where the population of all classes is so largely and purely British, where there is a larger proportion of fertile habitable territory, where there is (for its area) a larger quantity of unworked mineral wealth of varying descriptions and where the white population (1,000,000 all told) is so deplorably small, taking into account its very remarkable natural endowment.¹⁸

Furthermore, if the rhetoric was followed, then the importation of British "know-how" would be of great benefit to New Zealand. Lord Bledisloe, operating on the speech circuit of Imperial engagements, official dinners and

¹⁷ E. N. Bennett, *Problems of Village Life*, (London, Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1924), p.93.

¹⁸ Evidence given by Lord Bledisloe to the Overseas Settlement Board, 25 April 1937 in A.J.C.P.5416: 694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

statements in the mid 1930s, was quick to gauge the British view of what New Zealand required;

The crying need, so far at least as New Zealand is concerned, is the availability of British capital and British brains and experience, to develop the natural resources of the Country and to establish factories (preferably of a kind ancillary to her primary productions) or to the getting of her minerals, and to organise small-scale land settlement in areas specially favoured in the matter of soil and climate.¹⁹

Lord Bledisloe's romantic vision leant heavily on land settlement, in which he saw three types of settler; the 'retired Civil Servant' living on private means, the 'producer for export' who would make up the majority of the rural population, and the self-contained 'peasant farmer', similar to those in Europe. It was a view with some support in Britain among Leo Amery and his peers, where it was believed land settlement would bring social peace and stability to Empire relations.²⁰ This particular view was unfortunate because the New Zealand government had stated categorically in 1922 that it could undertake no land settlement schemes. Rather, it saw the 1922 Empire Settlement Act as a means of establishing assisted passages for 10,000 migrants to contribute to the labour force.

While the Empire Migration scheme would provide the means, some effort had to be made in the period after World War One to attract possible interested persons. With this in mind greater prominence was given to the Empire in the curricula of British schools.²¹ The Imperial Institute, as the 'clearing house' for scientific, commercial and technical information throughout the Empire, was one such interested body.²² It worked in cooperation with the departments of

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Drummond, p.144.

²¹ Quarto from Lord Barnaby to the Duke of Devonshire, December 1938 in A. J. C. P.5406:666, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners.

²² Report from the Imperial Conference 1930, on the work of the Imperial Institute, E. E. (30) 10. in A.J.C.P.5112: 187, 7114/1 (ref. no: DO35/189/8011/2). International Labour Office report on the migration of workers; Dispatch to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs from the Governor-General of New Zealand, A.J.H.R., A-1, No.3. 1926. From 1925 the Institute was being managed and provided for by the contribution of funds from Commonwealth countries. By 1930 the Institute was kept solvent by private donations from members of the British peerage.

Agriculture, Forestry, Mines and Geology in all parts of the Empire, but in London in particular, and most Empire governments paid for the propaganda benefits of its exhibition galleries until 1931.²³ Posters and pamphlets were available from the Colonial office in the period leading up to World War One and presumably afterwards, but some further effort was needed to appeal to the community at large. Members of the Office for the New Zealand High Commission spoke before associations of importers, exporters, tourists and others, as well as providing information on farming, shipping and the handling of merchandise. The British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1925, which Paul Rich has argued was intended to reinforce the "imperial ethos", and an Imperial Institute Exhibition Gallery in London were used to show school children and members of the public displays of the development and resources of the various parts of the British Empire.²⁴ Schoolboy Jack Locke, who was later to emigrate to New Zealand, attended the exhibition at Wembley;

They had .. all different British Empire .. all different films, from Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, India. .. And I spent my time at the New Zealand pavilion. It was well done and used film and pictures of lovely cows and green fields, and milk maids - nice girls. (laugh) So I think, I'll go to New Zealand.²⁵

The British Empire Exhibition with its Empire-wide audiences was believed by its New Zealand staff to be very successful in terms of propaganda.²⁶ In his report the Exhibition Commissioner stated that;

The N.Z. cinema was undoubtedly the best in the whole exhibition. It was efficiently equipped, tastefully decorated, and the films covered almost every aspect of N. Z. life, industry and scenery. It was a most useful adjunct to the general scheme of propaganda; and the attendances were most gratifying.²⁷

²³ Ibid. Each country paid an annual levy to the Institute for the work of its exhibition galleries and "intelligence and investigations." But by 1931 the financial conditions of Australia, India and New Zealand precluded any contribution.

²⁴ P. B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, (2nd edn), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.65.

²⁵ Interview with Jack Locke by J. Malcolm, 20 June 1995. Authors collection.

²⁶ Reports on the British Empire Exhibition 1925 to the House of Representatives, 1926. LE1 1926/100 (162), British Empire Exhibition, Wembley 1924-25. National Archives.

²⁷ Ibid.

By 1927 the Imperial Institute's Empire films were being shown morning and afternoon in its cinema. The Imperial Institute was later to set up an Empire Film Library available to all members of the British Commonwealth, for which there was a very high demand²⁸ It is likely that for this reason the New Zealand government made a special contribution to the upkeep of its court at the Imperial Institute until the early 1930s.²⁹ It should be noted, however, that the New Zealand government spent less for publicity in Great Britain than any other country, with an account of only £3,616 in 1928.³⁰ Interestingly, for the same period £5,000 was spent on publicity in Australia where the New Zealand Tourist Officer organised film displays throughout the Commonwealth.³¹

Being a relatively small, and young country with limited fiscal power, New Zealand's approach to immigration in a time of political change and economic crisis was in essence to shelve the issue until it could be avoided no more. From 1920 until 1926, New Zealand's quota for British migrants was 10,000 per year. The quota was temporarily raised to 13,500 in 1927 because a shipping strike in 1926 had prevented the expected numbers from arriving. During 1927 rising unemployment numbers caused the government to reduce migration numbers for the coming winter. This reduction became settled policy from 1928 and passage assistance only became available to separated families, domestics and single women and Flock House, Salvation Army and Church of England boys.³² In the 1929 to 1930 immigration year, Immigration Department authorities decided to restrain immigration indefinitely, and in the

²⁸ The continuation of this library was clearly considered a priority. From 1933 the Institute itself was dissolved because of a lack of funds, but in 1937 its library function was still in operation but being managed by other bodies.

²⁹ Memo for the Consideration of the Managing Committee, December 18, 1936 p.3, in A.J.C.P.5112: 187, 7114/1 (ref. no: DO35/189/8011/2). International Labour Office report on the migration of workers.

³⁰ *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol. 222, September 4, 1929, p.821.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Annual Report of the Department of Immigration, D-9, *A.J.H.R.* 1928, p.1.

wake of the depression, restrictions were even made on unassisted British migration.³³

However, when the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931 was allowed to expire on 31 December 1936, British people were no longer restricted. This time, the response was different. The flow of migrants that followed was minor; in the 1936-37 year, eleven migrants received assisted passages. The reason is difficult to surmise. In one sense there is a suggestion that the system itself was a failure because it could not guarantee ultimate success. Labour Prime Minister M. J. Savage was to argue that the very nature of the nomination system had been problematic, as often nominators guaranteed work that they did not have.³⁴ The majority of people in Britain who were available for migration overseas were industrial workers who might not necessarily adapt readily to rural settlement. One of the functions therefore of training in the state-aided migration schemes was to give prospective migrants a chance to experience the work they would be involved in and where possible, to separate out "unsuitable" applicants. This of course did not ensure the ultimate suitability of individuals for the Dominion lifestyle. In response to enquiries from the British Dominions Emigration Society, a spokesperson for the New Zealand Government pithily replied that "the nominees as a whole were fairly satisfactory with a few glaring exceptions."³⁵ This might be partially explained by a change in expectations on the part of the receiving government.

The actions of Labour could also be construed simply as Labour policy. However, this is harder to understand when considering a rather inconsistent

³³ The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931, 21 Geo V, no.2, compelled even British immigrants to obtain permits before entering New Zealand. The Act expired on 31 December 1936. See Chapter One.

³⁴ Meeting between the Overseas Settlement Board and Mr Savage, 17 June 1937 in A.J.C.P.5406:666, M2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners etc. See also Women's Division New Zealand Farmers Union Minute Book, 29 July 1927, p.1.

³⁵ Development of the British Dominions Emigration Society Agreement 1938, in A.J.C.P.5419:702, M472/1-16, British Dominions Emigration Society: United Kingdom grants to migrants expenses: general.

change of policy. Despite their initially muted response to calls to restart immigration, the New Zealand Government did agree in 1938 and 1939 to the renewal of the Empire Settlement Act scheme. The change of policy is likely to have been caused by pressure from the British government who gave ongoing economic support, which possibly occurred at the 1938 Dominions Conference.³⁶ It might also have been the culmination of discussions between Minister of Finance Walter Nash and the British Government in 1937.³⁷

The scheme provided, by way of a guarantee and a loan, finance for approved persons for passages, rail costs, and in some cases initial expenses. Like its predecessors, the Act was funded jointly by the British and New Zealand Governments. In nature it was much the same as the 1922 agreement. The nomination system was again in use, although at that time very few nominations of any sort were accepted.³⁸ Assisted passages were granted only to women and children joining men already settled in New Zealand, young men under the age of nineteen, and women proceeding to domestic employment. While the change of policy is difficult to explain, the interpretation of the Act is equally surprising. The actual numbers assisted were minimal. In 1938, for example, twelve people emigrated to New Zealand under the Act and through the recommendation of voluntary societies.³⁹ The reprieve for the Act was brief. For with the outbreak of war in September 1939, financial assistance from Great Britain was terminated, except in the case of the reunion of families.

The advent of the second World War was without doubt the final blow to mass assisted migration and the Empire Settlement Act. However, satisfaction

³⁶ See Chapter One.

³⁷ See Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce, A.J.H.R., H-44, 1937, p.27.

³⁸ Alliances Memorandum The War Office, No.1, 1930, p.5, in A. J. C. P.5420:704, M510/2, War Office literature on overseas settlement: proposed free passage grants for old soldiers emigrating to the Dominions.

³⁹ Report on Number of People Assisted in 1938 under the Empire Settlement Acts 1922 and 1937, Dominions Office, in A. J. C. P.5421:707, M534/1-3, Overseas Settlement Department: estimates 1938.

with the suitability of applicants had declined in recent years, possibly for the reason that New Zealand citizens were more distinct from Britons than they had been. Possibly too, some had been warned that New Zealand's healthy and egalitarian reputation concealed major lifestyle adjustments in an unspoiled but difficult environment.

If the people of New Zealand had to be flattened down into a single generalisation squeezed into a phrase, we might have to say still that we are Britain transplanted, by contrast with Australia, which is beginning to be Britain re-born. But that is one of the many concessions which conceal the truth. It may be with difficulty that we are becoming ourselves, but we have ceased to be anybody else. There has, for example, been a less rapid assimilation of those British immigrants who have arrived during the last twenty-five years, not because they are different material from those who came earlier but because we are different for our parents and grandparents. When the soil is loose and open there is easy absorption of rain. When a crust has formed a good deal of rain has to fall to soften it, and in the meantime a good deal runs away. We know that a proportion, not large but noticeable, of those who came here between 1920 and 1930 returned disgruntled, and although one reason for the exodus was the fact that it was easily possible -many pioneers would also have changed their minds if the chance had come - another was the difficulty of breaking the crust.⁴⁰

It was becoming recognised in New Zealand that blanket legislation on grounds of nationality were not enough to guarantee that "suitable" migrants were arriving. It appears that the authorities became slightly less vigilant on the monitoring of non-British migrants in the late 1930s. On a visit to London in 1938, Prime Minister Savage was open to the possibility of non-British migrants, suggesting Danish, "or any other suitable type" provided that there was preparation in New Zealand.⁴¹ The New Zealand Assisted Passage scheme was eventually extended to include a limited number of Dutch citizens possessing particular skills after 1950.⁴² Correspondingly the New Zealand government also became more selective of British migrants, realising the status of British citizenship did not necessarily imply "suitability". By 1939, for

⁴⁰ O. Duff, *New Zealand Now*, (Wellington, Department of Internal Affairs, 1941), pp.28-29.

⁴¹ Nash quoted in *The Times*, 1 July 1938, in A.J.C.P.5407:669, M3/1-24, Overseas Settlement Board: settlement schemes and suggestions submitted by private parties.

⁴² K. W. Thomson, "The Dutch," in K. W. Thomson & A. Trlin, (ed) *Immigrants in New Zealand*, (Palmerston North, Massey University Press, 1970), p.156.

example, both Australia and New Zealand had passed legislation restricting the entry of British migrants who had been imprisoned.⁴³

While the Overseas Settlement Board and the British government had placed an onus on migration to strengthen the empire, they also recognised that it was a difficult goal to achieve in view of the unwillingness of the Dominion governments.⁴⁴ Fundamentally, however, the willingness of British policy makers meant very little in the light of a decline in willing participants, possibly for the reason that the reality of the 'colonial lifestyle' was being comprehended and considered by correspondents at Home. At the same time as emphasis was being placed on emigration within the empire, a discussion paper on the subject of "migration-mindedness" came to the attention of the Overseas Settlement Board. In view of his findings, the author wrote;

I think it is true to say that Emigration is today suspect among English people, less perhaps among the old whose memories include the pre-war successes and among the young who have not had personal contact with the many people who experienced the difficulties of overseas settlement in the post-war period; but among people from the middle twenties to the forties Emigration is very often associated with the bitter regrets of friends and relatives who have failed to improve their condition overseas and in frequent instances have experienced hardship and poverty.⁴⁵

In retrospect the active and later the inactive recruitment of "white" British migrants indicates a great deal more than a patriotic commitment to the Imperial ideal. The conception of these British citizens as "suitable" demonstrates the perception of the Empire as a single political unit with its own peculiar rules. While most peoples had only one nationality, "white" British citizens had both British legal identity and that of their country of origin.⁴⁶ The

⁴³ Memoranda from the Dominions Office to the Home Office: Re the Criminal Justice Amendment Bill, 1939, in A. J. C. P.5422:710, M555/1-3, Immigration regulations of the various Dominions: effect on entry of British alien immigrants.

⁴⁴ Report of the Overseas Settlement Board, April 1937, p.1 in A.J.C.P.5407:670, M5 (PQ) 4, Overseas Settlement Board: reports on work: parliamentary questions; Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 25 January 1937 in Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 317-327, col.595.

⁴⁵ W. D. Forsyth, "Note on Migration-Mindedness", Memo to the Overseas Settlement Board, in A.J.C.P.5406:667, M2/11, (Part I) Overseas Settlement Board: background papers circulated.

⁴⁶ Cabinet of the Imperial Conference 1930, "'Personal Rights' for 'British subjects' in the Commercial Treaties," in A. J. C. P.5074:90, 4011/5-312, Imperial Conference and Imperial Economic Conference 1930.

British immigrants were the most convenient of all migrants, because they already had citizenship. Furthermore the distinction was arbitrarily one of colour which highlighted the racial nature of New Zealand immigration policy. Procedures gave no notice to the matter of an immigrant's national allegiance, but rather, the colour of his or her skin, and their place of origin.⁴⁷ The conception of "white" British migrants as "suitable" also represents the prevalence of the belief that British citizens uniformly possessed the same values, mores, stamina and attitudes to labour. Following that, the intention of this part of the thesis, is to concentrate on what James Belich calls "the crusader targets",⁴⁸ that is, to look at immigration policy as a colonising crusade in which the focal points were young men and women to work primarily in rural areas, and to determine why it was that official policy to British assisted migration changed so drastically.

⁴⁷ Ponton, pp.48-49.

⁴⁸ Belich, p.333.

Chapter three: Martial heroes and the yeoman ideal : the labour of male immigrants, 1919-1939.

In the earliest days of European settlement in New Zealand immigration was controlled by economics; only those with money or specific occupations were able to make the journey. Free passages and cheaper land were made available from the 1870s, and unsurprisingly the population almost doubled due to the combination of natural increase and immigration. Many young single men came to the gumfields and gold fields of New Zealand in search of adventure and economic reward, and it could be argued that very little changed in the twentieth century, as "young, able bodied men" were still the government's ideal choice for prospective settlers.¹ As historian Stephen Constantine has maintained, immigration policies are potentially powerful tools for adjusting an existent social and economic structure.² This chapter will argue that post World War One immigration policy and its concomitants, public opinion and governmental funding, severely challenged the Empire's yeoman ideal. The realities of soldier resettlement, as well as the changing emphasis and demand for farm labour greatly affected the country's standing as a pastoral paradise.

The outbreak of war in 1914 effectively ended imperial migration for five years, and with that came the limitation of assisted immigration schemes in New Zealand. Immigration from 1914 to 1919 added only 6,790 to the population, of whom 6,170 were assisted.³ These individuals were either close relatives of Dominion residents or domestic servants and were required to have been issued with passports endorsed by the British Ambassador from the country in which they came. Nor could people over the age of fifteen with the

¹ Interview between Dr. Harrop and H. T. Armstrong, London, 21 July 1937, L1, 22/1/2, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. National Archives.

² Constantine, "Immigration, Population and New Zealand's Destiny", pp.16-28.

³ Borrie, p.158.

exception of soldiers, ships crews or on-going passengers, leave New Zealand except by a special permit issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs. All Dominion governments including New Zealand's, adhered to the Imperial policy of disallowing the entry of British immigrants eligible for war work or military service. In this matter, New Zealand effectively bowed to the greater knowledge of the British government, contributing to an imperial uniformity.

The return and the resettlement of martial heroes

The so called 'problem' of re-establishing returned soldiers, sailors and service personnel was an inevitable situation. War began in 1914 with an artificial redistribution of large numbers of people to Europe, and it was only a matter of time before it was necessary for the majority of them to be redispersed. New Zealand had sent over one hundred thousand people overseas as soldiers and as nurses; an estimated ten percent of the dominion's mean population in 1914.⁴ Of the 99,894 men sent with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 16,781 died.

The subject of Reconstruction had two practical problems; how to get men back from the theatres of war to their old niches as quickly as possible, and how to release the general population from the strictures of war to enable them to return to their pre-war activities.⁵ Initially, British authorities were preoccupied with Reconstruction on the domestic front, because the Colonial Office was against making post-war emigration a serious issue of reconstruction.⁶ It was the Royal Colonial Institute, with its high profile role and a commitment to raising public awareness as to the benefits of empire

⁴ N.Z.O.Y., 1920, p.84.

⁵ Reconstruction Problems 1; The Aims of Reconstruction, (Ministry of Reconstruction, 1918), p.3.

⁶ K. Fedorowich, Unfit for Heroes. Reconstruction and Soldier Settlement in the Empire between the wars, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995), p.26.

migration, which agitated for large-scale soldier settlement projects overseas.⁷ From the Northern summer of 1916 the issue of post-war reconstruction made post-war imperial migration an important issue⁸

In New Zealand, the issue began receiving attention before the great influx began indeed, the first soldier settlement legislation was initiated in 1915. At the start of war, the Reform government owed a great deal to its increasingly powerful rural electorates, and so it was with certainty that the government looked to further land settlement to absorb the returning soldiers afterwards.⁹

The actual interaction with Dominion governments on the matter of resettlement of soldiers was done by the Royal Colonial Institute; a calculated "unofficial" move which kept its actions on the desks of the Colonial Office. In 1916 the Institute instructed a representative to visit the Dominions and establish the extent to which the dominion governments would be prepared to assist land settlement and employment of ex-sailors and soldiers living in the United Kingdom. The choice of well-known fiction writer Sir Rider Haggard as its representative, was no idle one. Haggard was equally experienced in agricultural writing and had undertaken several studies of English agricultural conditions and rural population.¹⁰ He had also served in more official capacities as a special commissioner to the colonial office studying Salvation Army settlement in the United States, and as a member of the Dominions Royal Commission. He lent a particularly rural focus to the tour that would have left the Dominion governments in no doubt.

In New Zealand the government's response to Haggard's suggestions was tentative. While Prime Minister Massey agreed that post-war British migration should be directed within the empire, and that New Zealand would welcome

⁷ Ibid, pp.26-28

⁸ Ibid, p.26.

⁹ J.M. Powell, "Soldier Settlement in New Zealand, 1915-1923," *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. IX, No.7, October 1971, p.145; Fedorowich, p.178.

¹⁰ *Dictionary of National Biography, Twentieth Century 1922-30*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1937), p.377

the settlement of British migrants over other "classes", the first claim upon Crown lands and on any other lands purchased by the government for the purpose of settlement would be given to members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces.¹¹ The subject of land settlement was a sensitive one.

The other dominions were similarly vague. While representatives of the Union of South Africa admitted to the presence of "general desire for more white population" it was thought to be unreasonable to expect the creation of an immigration policy.¹² Australian representatives assured Sir Rider Haggard that his intentions had "no chance at all" because of the "peculiar political situation of the State and other causes" despite their general amenability to the subject.¹³ Only the Canadian government granted Haggard's proposals in their entirety, to the effect that ex-servicemen from the United Kingdom would be granted the same privileges as regards land settlement as Canadian returned soldiers.¹⁴ None would consent to separate the question of the settlement of ex-servicemen from the general question of immigration. Importantly, however, the lukewarm response was viewed both by the British public and by the Colonial office as being very successful, and became the start of another Royal Colonial Office initiative to coerce moves.¹⁵

Kent Fedorowich has argued that in Britain pressure for positive state intervention in the resettlement and retraining of ex-soldiers came from two causes, the Royal Colonial Institute, which directed the campaign, and the failure of the Board of Reconstruction between 1915 and 1920 to come up with a large-scale domestic colonisation which appealed to the Colonial Office.¹⁶ Consideration was given to the question of allotting small parcels of land to ex-servicemen in Britain but the initial trials of three experimental holdings were

¹¹ W. F. Massey to Haggard, 8 June 1916 in Report to the Royal Colonial Institute by Sir Rider Haggard, (London, Saint Catherine Press, 1916).

¹² Haggard's comments in *ibid.*, pp.4-5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.28.

¹⁵ Fedorowich, p.28.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.26

so minor that critics dismissed the attempts, arguing that the need for a more decisive policy was crucial.¹⁷ The matter was simply compounded by inflation, wartime speculation and by limited resources, and eventually the issue became a non-issue.

These two points considered, there were conditions within Britain which were conducive to the emigration of ex servicemen. The social environment was ripe for positive decision-making regarding settlement. There was a notable growth of widespread discontent within the armed forces in the latter part of 1918 and the first six months of 1919.¹⁸ As the disturbances were seen to escalate and intensify, politicians in the 1918 election became sensitive to the veterans issues; domestic and overseas settlement.¹⁹ Furthermore, in the light of new economic conditions created by the war and possible short-sightedness afterwards, general rhetoric articulated by the scholars of the time expounded the belief that Great Britain had a population that its industries could not absorb.²⁰ What were the alternatives? Historically, emphasis had been placed on agricultural settlement in the dominions.²¹ Farming represented a good safe living for heroes returning from war, and in emigration literature, New Zealand in particular was described as having ideal conditions for farming and agriculture.²² It was a proven solution. Pressure may also have been exerted by the 1918 report of the Dominions Royal Commission which recommended that the overseas settlement schemes should include British soldiers, and which reinforced the need for schemes to be administered by the individual dominions but co-ordinated more centrally.²³

¹⁷ Ibid., p.35.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.36

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ W. A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles; with special reference to the development of the overseas dominions*, (London, P. S. King and Son Ltd., 1929) p.260.

²¹ K. Fedorowich, 'The assisted emigration of British ex-servicemen to the dominions, 1914-1922,' in S. Constantine (ed) *Emigrants and Empire. British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990), p.66.

²² C. Turnor, *Land Settlement for Ex-servicemen in the Oversea Dominions. Report to the Royal Colonial Institute*, (London, The Saint Catherine Press, 1920), pp.23-24.

²³ Dominions Royal Commission. *Final Report 1917*, (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office,

In 1917 the Empire Settlement Committee was established in London to consider and report on the measures to be put in place for the settlement of ex-service men and women after the war, and to distribute information to the services themselves. The Royal Colonial Institute had been officially ignored in the formation of the committee but was unofficially represented by Rider Haggard. In its findings the Empire Settlement Committee approved in principle the prospect of a free passage for imperial soldiers and in turn the Imperial War Cabinet officially accepted the need for limited state intervention in the matter. Within six months, the pressure on Bonar Law, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, became so intense that he began to emphasise the need for finding openings at home for the largest number of ex-servicemen.²⁴

In 1920 another British expert, Christopher Turnor, reported to the Royal Colonial Institute. Like Haggard, Turnor had extensive agricultural experience and had written several books on land reforms and empire.²⁵ He was also an impassioned speaker on the subject of the educational reform of agriculture. Turnor's 1920 report investigated what measures were being taken by the Dominion governments to place ex-servicemen on the land as a result of the 1916 visit, and what they would be prepared to do for British ex-servicemen. At this time mention was made of the importance of guiding the flow of population from Britain. It was known that many returning troops would desire to leave Britain but it was hoped that they might be encouraged to settle within the Empire. Turnor's report was based upon an estimation of three and a half million hectares of undeveloped land and it naively assumed that land currently in the ownership of Maori would eventually become available.²⁶ Turnor's concerns were voiced in racial overtones:

1918), p.229.

²⁴ Fedorowich, in Constantine, pp.49-50.

²⁵ Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940, (London, Oxford University Press, 1949), pp.874-75.

²⁶ Turnor, p.22.

We have only a limited white population within our vast Empire; it must be carefully husbanded, and above all every effort must be made to check immigration to foreign countries. We cannot in the present acute crisis afford to lose a single citizen.²⁷

In 1919, a committee was appointed by the Secretary of State for Colonies to make inquiries into opportunities for the settlement of ex-servicemen within the Empire. This group, the Overseas Settlement Committee comprised twenty-five people representing a cross-section of British, dominion, state and provincial governments, and several outside interests including the Salvation Army were nominated.²⁸ The direct result of the report by the Overseas Settlement Committee was the inauguration of a Free Passage Scheme for ex-service men and women (I.F.P.S.).²⁹ This move would provide funding to realise the empire-wide movement of ex-Imperial troops. Without this the migration would have been impossible.

The I.F.P.S. ensured that those who had enlisted for active duty and whose service began before 1 January 1920, except for those who had served only with dominion, colonial or Indian army units, were eligible to obtain free third class passages for themselves and their dependants to the nearest convenient port of the dominion or colony of their choice. On average, each application carried two dependants.³⁰ Widows of ex-servicemen and their dependants were also covered under this scheme. The I.F.P.S. resulted in transferring over 80,000 people to other parts of the Empire from its inauguration until 1922 when all the privileges were withdrawn.³¹ 12,890 of these people came to New Zealand, with around 4,000 arriving annually between 1920 and 1922.

All applications were dealt with by local officers of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Pensions to check eligibility. But it was the duty of each Dominion government to look into whether the applicant had employment

²⁷ Ibid., p.5.

²⁸ Fedorowich, *Unfit for Heroes*, p.51.

²⁹ Carrothers, p.259.

³⁰ *The Press*, 27 September 1920, p.6.

³¹ Figures cited in Carrothers, p.259.

arranged and whether he or she was medically suitable. Representatives of the New Zealand government scrutinised applications for immigration very carefully and only accepted those applicants it thought had good prospects of success.³² Furthermore, before the scheme came into existence, the New Zealand government was careful to stress that while it was anxious not to discourage the immigration to New Zealand of discharged soldiers, they would not be able to offer them employment until their own soldiers had been placed.³³

Significantly, the I.F.P.S. was not viewed by the British government as being an indication of change of policy with regard to state-aided migration, but rather was seen as a grant of a special character being given to a particular class - ex-service personnel.³⁴ In February 1919 the committee submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in which it stated its continuing commitment to avoiding state funding in emigration schemes;

There does not seem to be sufficient reason for departing from the established policy of His Majesty's government of refusing to grant State aid upon any considerable scale to emigration in general, beyond such aid as is involved in the improvement of communications and the encouragement of the flow to the Dominions of the capital which is essential to all development, and consequently to the influx of population. In other words, while it is desirable to multiply the general facilities for Imperial development and communication, thus incidentally facilitating migration within the empire on natural lines, it is not, as a general rule, necessary or desirable artificially to stimulate the emigration of individuals as such.³⁵

Fundamentally there was disagreement as to what the nature of repatriation was. For New Zealand, the possibility of accepting British ex-servicemen, if not New Zealand troops, was a matter of immigration. But for the British legislature it constituted a special case unrelated to immigration. There were broader principles involved than just the indiscriminate importation of returning war troops.

³² Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p.73.

³³ *N.Z.P.D.* Vol. 184, September 17, 1919, p.598.

³⁴ Carrouthers, p.259.

³⁵ Memorandum quoted in *ibid.*, p.260.

While the I.F.P.S. was statistically regarded as a success in Britain the final tally in 1922 was a far cry from the initial estimates of early 1919, which had predicted that 405,000 imperial soldiers would make the break for empire.³⁶ Relative to the New Zealand aspect of this issue, only guarded encouragement to immigration was given by the New Zealand Immigration Department which placed a great deal of emphasis on a severe housing shortage for the duration of the scheme. The department decided not to accept applicants under the I. F. P. S. unless they could be assured of the applicants already having accommodation and employment.³⁷ However, it is interesting to note that in 1921 in its annual report, pride is taken in reporting that in every instance over the previous year, housing was able to be found for immigrants.³⁸ In this sense the issue could be seen as relating more to an anticipated problem than to any immediate shortage. By 1923 the situation seemed worse rather than better, as the *Dominion* reported:

The protection given to tenants in war and post-war years has discouraged private dwelling enterprise and heavily intensified the demand for dwellings. At the same time high money wages and high prices of materials have made it more difficult than in pre-war years to arrange a practicable basis of assistance.³⁹

Also related to this depression was a shortage in shipping in 1920-21, which had been predicted by the Dominions Royal Commission.⁴⁰ Ian Drummond, in his discussion of Imperial Economic policy in this period, argues that the insufficient availability of shipping to export as many ex-service personnel as might want to leave, was in part responsible for extending the Free Passage Scheme from 1920, until 1922.⁴¹ New Zealand in particular noticed shipping

³⁶ Fedorowich, in Constantine, p.66.

³⁷ Annual report of the Department of Immigration, A.J.H.R, 1921, D-9, p.2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4

³⁹ Clipping from the *Dominion*, 19 February 1923, in L 9, W1232, Unnumbered files -housing 1919-25. Cuttings from newspapers on government housing scheme, National Archives.

⁴⁰ Dominions Royal Commission, Final Report 1917, p.228.

⁴¹ Drummond, p.62.

problems as early as 1919 when there was a delay of almost a month for troops aboard the military transport *Cordoba*.⁴²

The dislocation created by sending a large body of the New Zealand population overseas was to have many ramifications. Not only had the steady influx of manhood been halted, creating a gender imbalance in the social structure of what was normally the reproductive cohort of the society, but New Zealand was also effected by the sudden cessation of youthful manpower. For those who did come home, New Zealand of 1919 was found to be quite different to the New Zealand they had left. During their absence, those who remained were trained to maintain a high level of production using a primarily female work force. Veterans returned to a country which had prospered financially from the war; a competitive society in which the cost of living and the price of land was soaring.⁴³

The Returned Soldier's Association in New Zealand (or R. S. A.) was formed to represent the rights of soldiers once they came home, and at times its stand on issues of returned servicemen's welfare differed from that of the government. The New Zealand government passed legislation in 1915 and in 1916 to provide land tenure and financial assistance for discharged soldiers.⁴⁴ While the R. S. A. had confidence in the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act 1915, it considered that its application was neither thorough, nor fast enough.⁴⁵ The association's official newspaper *Quick March*, featured regular articles on pension, land settlement, repatriation problems and the latest training schemes. The R. S. A. itself became particularly concerned in the issue of "coloured" immigration because the soldiers wanted no competition or diversion of government funds to impede the rehabilitation of its members⁴⁶.

⁴² *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol. 184, September 18, 1919, p.689.

⁴³ J. O. Melling, "The New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association, 1919-23", M. A. (History), Victoria University College, 1952, p.2.

⁴⁴ *Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1915*, no.45, 6 Geo V.; *Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment 1916*, no. 4, 7 Geo V.

⁴⁵ Melling, part V, chapter 3.

⁴⁶ Thomson, and Trlin, p.19.

The association was not alone in voicing its concerns about the government's policy as regards them. At one time or another the Returned Soldiers were supported by Employers Associations, Industrial Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Councils, Patriotic Societies, and 'other bodies'.⁴⁷ They had considerable economic backing.

What was equally clear was that the R. S. A. had sheer force of numbers behind them. Interestingly however the apparently unified nature of the R. S. A. structure might not necessarily have reflected the reality, for in June 1919 a suggestion for the creation of a separate Maori R. S. A. had been raised.⁴⁸ However the move was rejected by several local associations and the R. S. A. executive.

Early on, in the first issue of *Quick March*, the R. S. A. had been prompt in pointing out that while "Repatriation" schemes were bountiful, none of the formulating bodies had consulted the soldiers themselves.⁴⁹ The term itself is a misnomer. "Rehabilitation" more accurately describes the responsibilities of the scheme to help soldiers return to civilian life. In July 1919, the Repatriation Committee of the R. S. A. defined its areas of concern as relating to pensions for disablement, employment, rural land settlement, establishing businesses, and establishing dwellings.⁵⁰ Repatriation encompassed not only the returning of soldiers to their own regions, but was also concerned for their rehabilitation in the community.

Land settlement became a particular issue in which the R. S. A. believed that the government was not treating soldiers fairly. Between December 1917 and July 1920 the New Zealand government purchased 306,099 acres of land at a total cost of £3,469,951.⁵¹ An extraordinary rise in the market value of land

⁴⁷ Quick March, Official Paper (Monthly) of the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association, Vol. 1, No. 6, p.17.

⁴⁸ Melling, p.118.

⁴⁹ Editorial' *Quick March*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p.1.

⁵⁰ Report of the Repatriation Committee', *Quick March*, Vol. II, No. 15, p.53.

⁵¹ LE 1 1920/244 (984), New Zealand, House of Representatives, Return to an Order, 20 September 1920, National Archives. A proposal was made by the Auckland R. S. A. in 1919 to

meant that these properties were offered for sale to Prime Minister Massey's government at highly inflated prices which had virtually no resemblance to their official government valuation. One reason for this perhaps is that crown land suitable for agricultural development was widespread, isolated and uncommon. It was generally of marginal quality and therefore unsuitable for inexperienced immigrants. As the Dominions could and did only accept those immigrants for whom it could provide jobs and housing, the government was forced to reserve its meagre land resources for New Zealanders. At any rate, there were marked differences in British and New Zealand farm techniques.⁵² In this situation the repatriation of the Dominion's own troops received priority, and overrode the wishes of empire. Acceptance became limited to those applicants who were proceeding to certain types of assured employment and accommodation, or those who were nominated.⁵³

In New Zealand the prospect of placing returned soldiers on small farms was viewed with some public support. J. O. Melling draws attention in his thesis to incidents where a War Relief Association advanced money to soldier farmers, and local farmers at Seaward Downs in Southland raised donations for the purchase of grass seed for returned servicemen.⁵⁴ As a large sector of the New Zealand public, returned soldiers were a powerful interest group.

These measures did not in themselves assure success. While the rural land boom marked the post war decade, so too did price fluctuations. Overseas prices for wool, meat and butterfat fell, affecting newly established farmers the most. The government attempted to come to the rescue by adjusting mortgages, remitting some rent and lending to those viewed as worthy of

take over "unoccupied" Maori lands for settlement as part of a bid for a political platform but the platform itself was overturned. For further discussion see Melling, Part III, chapt.2.

⁵² Alan Mulgan draws attention to the disparity in wages, density of farm-hands and isolation in *Home. A Colonial's Adventure*, pp.107-108, 111.

⁵³ *The Press*, 16 February 1920 noted that while five hundred people per day applied to New Zealand House to emigrate, it would be at least a year until "a single immigrant can be carried except several thousand domestic servants and persons registered as nominated during the war."

⁵⁴ Melling, p.93.

"further support".⁵⁵ While the government intended to help soldiers get started on the land, its purchases were well above market value and the expansion of loan scheme had served to increase land speculation.⁵⁶ The freedom of credit available to farmers created a tragic spiral of events when combined with depressed prices, and numbers of settlers walked off their land.⁵⁷

Following further discussion, a Repatriation Bill was passed in January 1919, which established a state repatriation department and an infrastructure to administer "the restoration of discharged soldiers to civil life and the civil employment of occupation."⁵⁸ The scheme was relatively successful, for by June 1922, the department had placed 27,658 men in employment.⁵⁹ However, of those assisted into businesses only 10.4 percent went into farming.⁶⁰ At the end of its term in 1922, 93.5 percent of the Repatriation Department's expenditure represented direct advances to soldiers.⁶¹ The scheme was similar to the one established in Australia except for one thing which did not go unnoticed among the Returned Soldiers in New Zealand. The Australian boards had representatives of returned soldiers.⁶²

In Victoria, Marilyn Lake has noticed a similar, if not more comprehensive, degree of government intervention in the machinery of soldier settlement:

Expert guidance and detailed inspections would, it was hoped, serve to control the settlers and secure the state's investment. This paraphernalia of scrutiny was at once a response to the previous failure of land settlement and an expression of the attitude in society in favour of the rule of efficiency and 'scientifically informed' expertise. Like

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.97.

⁵⁶ B. McDonald and D. Thomson "Mortgage Relief, Farm Finance, and Rural Depression in New Zealand in the 1930s," New Zealand Journal of History, Vol.21 (2), October 1978, p.229.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Quick March, Vol. 1, No. 9, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Report regarding the organisation and operations of the Repatriation Department, A.J.H.R., H-30, 1922, p.2

⁶⁰ Report regarding the organisation and operations of the Repatriation Department, A. J. H. R., H-30, 1922, p.3-4. 656 soldiers were assisted into farming of the 6288 given business loans.

⁶¹ Report regarding the organisation and operations of the Repatriation Department, A.J. H. R., H-30, 1922, p.3.

⁶² Quick March, Vol. 1, No. 8, p. 17.

babies, school children and mothers of the same period, soldier settlers and their families would be closely monitored.⁶³

New Zealand appears to have been following a similar trend. While legislation had been enacted since 1915 to consider the settlement of returned soldiers, this latest legislation signified a more intrusive and accountable form of supervision. It may have arisen out of a concern for the abuse of government funds,⁶⁴ or it may, as Marilyn Lake argues about Victoria, have been a response to the changing character of New Zealand society. In Christopher Turnor's 1920 report he comments on the weakness of the administrative machinery for soldier settlement and argues for its strengthening and an increase in staff numbers.⁶⁵ This hint appears not to have been taken.

In 1921 the Massey government informed the Overseas Settlement Committee that applicants to New Zealand would require the assurance of employment and accommodation. Upon receiving this news the R. S. A. were concerned and warned of the danger of limiting the flow of immigrants from the United Kingdom.⁶⁶ The stance was prompted by a plea made by the president of the R. S. A., Dr Boxer for closer union in the empire for the purposes of maintaining peace.⁶⁷ However, the initial concern was not enough to turn the government away from this policy direction. Nor did it deter some columnists from making linkages between the unstable labour market and immigration. After vigorous debate at the 1922 R. S. A. conference, the veterans decided to support the government's temporary restriction of the Free Passage scheme.⁶⁸ The initial concern for the wrath of the R. S. A. appears to have been put aside. While W. D. Borrie has argued that in New Zealand the Overseas Settlement Scheme marked the end of attempts to force land settlement in New

⁶³ M. Lake, *The Limits of Hope. Soldier Settlement in Victoria, 1915-38*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1987), p.44.

⁶⁴ *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol. 179, September 7, 1917, p.957.

⁶⁵ Turnor, pp.27-28.

⁶⁶ *Quick March*, 10 March 1921, p.36; *Quick March*, 11 July 1921, pp.55,57,59.

⁶⁷ *Quick March*, 11 April 1921, p.39.

⁶⁸ Fedorowich, in Constantine, p.59; *Quick March* 11 April 1921, p.46.

Zealand,⁶⁹ it also marks the start of a decisiveness in New Zealand policy towards immigration, as the government prevailed over a powerful interest group.

Returned servicemen represented a dichotomy. On the one hand they could potentially be a focus of discontent, as is seen in New Zealand in the R. S. A., while on the other, they were the "martial heroes" to whom belonged the right to farm the "imperial hinterland".⁷⁰ As soldiers of empire, conceivably the fruits of the empire belonged to them. This drive was part of a genteel conception of a return to the moral and simple lifestyle; it was England as it should have been.⁷¹ In terms of the empire, Kent Fedorowich agrees that the soldier settlement schemes in general were an attempt to create:

. . . a landed imperial yeomanry which would strengthen imperial defence, enhance primary production and act as a protected market for British manufactured goods.⁷²

He believes that the empire was trying to manufacture free trade imperialism; an industrial metropole surrounded by an agricultural periphery. Soldiers were seen as proven ambassadors of imperial goodwill and therefore supposedly would make the best kind of landed yeomanry. This was a decidedly imperial view that did not necessarily suit a young dominion trying to assert its political independence and develop its industrial sector within a secure economic environment. The principle can be seen more readily as an ideal rather than a reality, as the New Zealand government was opposed to land settlement schemes, and would only discuss assistance schemes in relation to passages.⁷³

The existence of the "yeoman ideal", 1919-1939

⁶⁹ Borrie, p.161.

⁷⁰ Roe, p.9.

⁷¹ Belich, p.332.

⁷² Fedorowich, *Unfit for Heroes*, p.66

⁷³ Chapter 2, p.66.

At the heart of the Antipodean colonial identity was a rural nature that had been present since the start of European settlement. Both Australia and New Zealand devoted large tracts of land and manpower to the raising of primary products for their domestic and international markets. Similarly Australia faced similar issues regarding soldier settlement. Lake argues that soldier settlement in Australia was a last attempt at land settlement on a class focus based on the yeoman concept and the model of family production. But by the 1920s social change had caused this model to become anachronistic.⁷⁴

Lake's work delves into some of the problems actually faced in the implementation of the Victorian land settlement scheme, and identifies them as being economic and social. To a certain extent this was also true of New Zealand. New Zealand too had fostered the dream of the small shareholder who administered the family holdings with the help of free labour from his wife and family. Yet in 1920 it was a capitalist-based society that tended more towards industrialisation than ever before, and the economic climate did not allow for a fertile start for new farmers. The country had become capitalistic and industrially-burgeoning, and land was expensive and scarce. Moreover, farm production was increasing with the introduction of labour-saving technologies; tractors, top-dressing and milking machines were making hired hands obsolete.⁷⁵ Indeed, in New Zealand there was also a trend towards urbanisation, disturbing towards rural (as well as British) interests. The irony of the situation was noted by one Australian poet and reprinted in *Quick March*;

Repatriation (By "Curse O Moses")

Fenced with fine adjectives the farm-
stead stands
Along the road from Nowhere to
Takedown
About the Rhetoric flats and rising
lands

⁷⁴ Lake, pp.xvi, xviii.

⁷⁵ S. Constantine, "Immigration, population and New Zealand's destiny", p.20.

Of prerogation wander verb and noun
 Eating the grass of promise some-
 where bare
 But well sustained with warm and
 subtle air.

It is a place a soldier might desire
 Returning from the war-stirred
 Flanders mud
 And ruined lands beneath the Ger-
 man fire
 That sapped his strength and drank
 his flowing blood.
 He might desire it if he stood com-
 plete
 Without the need of cash or things to
 eat.⁷⁶

The Imperial dream of rural development in the Dominions was limited ultimately by money and by availability of land, and so too was the immigration of the veterans of World War One. However, as soldier settlement schemes came an end, the promotion of emigration for men interested in farming and industry was to continue. In this area the experiences of ex-servicemen and ordinary male immigrants were remarkably similar.

Under the Empire Settlement Act 1922, farm labourers up to the age of fifty were able to secure passage for between £8 and £12, and farmers approved by the High Commissioner could also advance to the dominion under assistance.⁷⁷ This desire to extend the farming base can be seen as a response to the trend that saw the younger sons of farmers moving to urban areas.⁷⁸ The mass movement had economic implications on the export of primary products and so the issue had some priority.

⁷⁶ *Quick March*, Vol. 1, no. 7, 1 November 1918, p.8.

⁷⁷ The rates for passage were renegotiated each year.

⁷⁸ Borrie, p.161.

By the mid 1920s the successive economic depressions were beginning to have an effect on immigration. In 1926 *The Round Table* (an imperialist publication) reported that A. D. McLeod, Minister of Lands, had announced that he would not give preference to immigrants over New Zealand-born would-be farmers despite a recent deputation's request for assistance in placing young British men in North Island farms.⁷⁹ The government had settled "10,000 soldiers" and clearly he felt this covered the imperial obligation. McLeod took on a somewhat paternalistic overtone when he added that "the most successful form of settlement had always been made by people who came to New Zealand, worked for wages, saved a little money, and then took up land for themselves."⁸⁰ The *Round Table's* columnist was anxious to reassure readers that public opinion was in fact in agreement with the principle of co-operation with Britain and therefore did not believe that the practise of labour migration was "futile." Irrespective of this, however, the government agreed in 1927 to limit assisted immigration to domestics and single women, Flock House, Salvation Army and Church of England boys, and to reuniting separated families.⁸¹ The special cost of £11 passage money for farmers and farm labourers which had been detailed in the 1922 agreement, was conspicuously absent.

Until the mid 1930s dairying could still lay claim to being the most important of New Zealand's industries.⁸² Farm work was hard with comparatively low wages for long hours worked, and usually required individuals to live in relatively isolated farming communities. Throughout the interwar period the rural sector continued to call for British migrants to work on the Dominions farms to offset the "great hardship on the women and children on the land."⁸³ However, when legislation fixing a minimum wage of

⁷⁹ *The Round Table*, 16, 1925-26, p.664

⁸⁰ *Ibid* p.665.

⁸¹ Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, *A. J. H. R.*, D-9, 1928, p.1.

⁸² *The Press*, 13 January 1933, p.10

⁸³ Telegram from the Pongakawa division of the Farmers Union to M. J. Savage, 26 November

£2 2s. 6d. a week for men aged twenty-one and over was introduced for dairy farm labourers, the dairy farmers' ability to employ a large number of workers was compromised, causing a displacement of farm labour to relief work.⁸⁴ Public works paid higher wages than farmers could afford, and understandably urban work which could offer better wages, shorter hours and more access to social interaction drew single young men to the towns in increasing numbers.

The trend was not helped by the tendency for single men to find better marriage prospects in towns.⁸⁵ As the Five Million Club noted, the shortage of labour was "gradually turning feminine opinion towards the evacuation of the land for city residence."⁸⁶ Dairy farmers were desperate for labour, and while the pay was poor - according to one source, as little as 10s. a week in 1936 - recent immigrants readily found work.⁸⁷ The disparity of job satisfaction and of wages between urban and rural populations, was to prove an on-going issue for farm workers, and it is little wonder that immigrants working on farms were usually itinerant.⁸⁸

The move to fix wages for dairy farm workers was an interesting one, because it was a bold move involving one of New Zealand's primary producing sectors, and could potentially affect the country's export figures. However, in terms of economic improvement dairy farming was not a good area for development, as potentially every country in the world could become self-sufficient in dairy products. By comparison, the production of meat and wool

1936, L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46, National Archives.

⁸⁴ Report on Lord Hartington's visit to Australia and New Zealand, 17 February 1937, in A.J.C.P.5406: 666, M2/10 Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners; Agricultural Workers Act 1936, 1 Edw. VIII, no. 30, s.14(2).

⁸⁵ Nineteenth meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 1 December 1936, in A. J. C. P.5418:700, M458/1-73. Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women; staff; policy; finances; activities; statistics; publicity.

⁸⁶ The Five Million Club, Report of Migration Committee, in A. J. C. P. 5416:694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy general.

⁸⁷ Immigrant R. L. Sharp commented that "The knowledge that, whatever happens, he can always get this farmwork, however ill-paid it may be, gives a man confidence in trying for something more lucrative." in The British Australian and New Zealander, August 1936, p.106 in A.J.C.P.5406:667, M2/11 (part 1) Overseas Settlement Board: background papers circulated.

⁸⁸Ibid.

could be an area in which New Zealand goods could predominate. It is possible that in 1938 the Government intended to divide all large parcels of land coming into their possession into small holdings for crop farming purposes.⁸⁹

In 1938 the Labour government was still unwilling to commit itself to a programme of immigration for the purpose of guaranteeing agricultural labour, as the Placement Office, which had been established to furnish the requirements of farmers, did not show a very large need for farm labourers.⁹⁰ Despite this the government was still very interested in finding skilled young people to work in agriculture. But their interest was focused in urban centres.⁹¹ The lack of local interest in rural employment was assumed to demonstrate a decline in demand for rural labour, a point with which the farming community did not concur.

By the mid 1930s the Labour Government began to acknowledge a shortage of skilled labour in its developing secondary industries.⁹² In the later thirties, several New Zealand firms attempted to overcome shortages in skilled artisans by obtaining them from Australia, which was a less costly alternative than Britain and the United Kingdom.⁹³ The move demonstrated a preoccupation with short-term labour needs rather than long-term immigration; Australian workers were less likely than those from the United Kingdom and Europe to settle in New Zealand because of the comparatively low cost of return travel.

Although it was sometimes assumed, for example by the farming community, that most young men came to New Zealand with the intention of

⁸⁹ C. Bavin Report on Tour of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, November 1937 to June 1938 in A. J. C. P.5420:704, M486/1-27, Young Men's Christian Association migration work: general: activities of Mr Bavin.

⁹⁰ Mr Armstrong (Minister of Immigration) in notes of a deputation to the Prime Minister, 21 February 1938 in L1, 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association 1936-55, National Archives.

⁹¹ Mr Armstrong, in notes of a deputation to the Prime Minister, 21 February 1938 in National Archives, L1, 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association 1936-55, National Archives.

⁹² Interview between Dr. Harrop and H. T. Armstrong, London, 21 July 1937, L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46, National Archives.

⁹³ The Five Million Club, Report of Migration Committee, in A. J. C. P.5416:694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

working as farmers and farm labourers, this was not the case. Many returned soldiers were in fact absorbed into secondary industries and clerical occupations in New Zealand towns. Importantly, while these men were "special cases" as returning war heroes, they rapidly found that on arrival they were required to fit a number of criteria. The New Zealand government began to advise, after the first World War, of the desirability of migrant miners, with somewhat mixed results. An invitation made to Australian miners was opposed by the Miner's Federation of New Zealand who "took steps to make this invitation ineffective."⁹⁴ Additional foreign miners were perceived as threatening to an ongoing coal dispute. By February 1920 however, British and Australian coal miners were beginning to arrive in the Dominion attracted by the prospect of good wage rates. The numbers of miners attracted in the years following were steady and followed the same trend as assisted farmers. The Immigration Department's survey of occupations on individual boats arriving indicates that approximately 300 miners were assisted every year from the year ended 1923, with a peak of 542 arriving in 1927, and then a sudden decline.⁹⁵

Putting on the New Zealand Identity.

Most settlers were relatively flexible in their plans for employment and settlement, and many who intended to farm in New Zealand had not had farming experience in Britain. Reginald Hughes, a former manufacturer, his wife Phyllis and their young daughter, arrived under the assisted immigration scheme in 1924 with the intention of becoming farmers. However, the local conditions - housing consisting of a little whare and the requirement that Phyllis should cook for men - did not appeal to the family, and Reginald

⁹⁴ The Press, 21 February 1920, p.8.

⁹⁵ In the years following numbers declined as the government restricted assistance policy came into force. By 1932 only 8 miners arrived. See A. J. H. R., D-9, 1923-1932.

eventually took a position as a salesman.⁹⁶ Other more urban-focused workers and their families also received assisted passages. The Taylor family, for example, had received assisted passages to sail in 1924; presumably they were nominated by family members already living in Christchurch. While William Taylor had worked in a fruit shop in Manchester, after emigrating with his family he worked variously as janitor at Rolleston House, at the premises of an indent agent, and on the Christchurch trams.⁹⁷ Others still, arrived without assistance. Ern Rogers was a Welsh coal miner who borrowed the passage money from his mother in lieu of an insurance policy he had held. On his arrival in New Zealand he worked for various contractors on drainage jobs and later took up a position at Dalgety's wool store in Christchurch.⁹⁸

A flexible approach was to be very useful to new arrivals as the pioneering lifestyle in back blocks New Zealand had reinforced a number of social differences. In the late nineteenth century a colonial stereotype had come into existence. An emphasis on physical versatility had quite logically evolved in the nineteenth century from New Zealand's isolated situation.⁹⁹ "Old chums", the realisation of this concept of established mateship, were to be admired as individuals who could "rough it" with little concern given to the inadequacies of diet, home comforts or social status.¹⁰⁰ The old chum, was part of a unique culture in which the new chum with his perceivably effeminate, genteel habits was very much an outsider. While the emphasis on the hardy nature of the "white" frontier experience was used as a means of legitimising the appropriation of land and resources from Maori,¹⁰¹ the "do-it-yourself" work ethic separated and distanced settlers from their British and Irish forebears. The distinctiveness of colonial identity was reinforced by the experiences of

⁹⁶ D. Eckhoff to J. Malcolm, 13 June 1995. Copy in author's collection.

⁹⁷ J. Martin to J. Malcolm, 23 June 1995. Copy in author's collection.

⁹⁸ D. G. Rogers to J. Malcolm, 25 July 1995. Copy in authors collection.

⁹⁹ J. Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History*, (Auckland, Penguin Books Ltd., 1987), p.18.

¹⁰⁰ Phillips, pp.1-42.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.39.

New Zealand troops abroad. First at Gallipoli, then at Chunuk Bair; the Australasians began to comment on the ineffectiveness of British troops, and disassociate themselves, so that in hindsight the New Zealand and Australian troops own efforts were a potent inducement for national feelings.¹⁰² Undoubtedly, it was, as Patrick O'Farrell argues in his book *Vanished Kingdoms*, "a response to a colonial challenge";

... The tailor turned ditch-digger or carpenter or journalist could occupy all of these roles without a colonial eyebrow raised, as long as he filled them proficiently. Indeed, a reverse process was in operation. In Ireland for a man to stoop to tasks beneath his agreed status would be to demean himself, to forfeit community respect. In the colonies the man who could do anything and everything was more of a man, not less.¹⁰³

Understandably, this differentiation of class was a point of contention. Was the lack of social differentiation evidence of the degradation of colonial societies, or of the evolution of Practical Man? Quite obviously the work-place and it's relationships were important in stratification, particularly in the working class, as is denoted by the existence of the terms "blue-collar" and "white-collar".¹⁰⁴ However attention should also be given to the role that social interactions like politics, values and beliefs had on economic change.¹⁰⁵ For example, the perception that the working class had of the value of their own labour created a kind of group identity within the colonial community. Troops from the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces noticed the differences that class had on English and New Zealand viewpoints in the first World War;

... troops from the Dominion were sometimes bluntly critical of their comrades from Britain. The two lots of men sprang from very different social and economic conditions. The colonial is quick to learn, adaptable and resourceful, a born improviser, and ready to move without orders. His society is not classless, and can exhibit forms of snobbery no less offensive than the worst of England', but its caste system is loose, and there has never been any feudal patronage. To a much greater extent than in England a man is judged by what he does, and not by his origin and social status. .¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² K. Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*, pp.156-174.

¹⁰³ O'Farrell, p.53.

¹⁰⁴ E. Olssen, *Building the New World*, pp.9-10.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.226-227.

¹⁰⁶ Mulgan, *The Making of a New Zealander*, (Wellington, A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1959), pp.113-

In fact, surviving the "colonial" existence of early twentieth century New Zealand had bred its own distinctive social hierarchy which was similar but different. The reciprocity and interdependence of the New Zealand condition had altered the possible meanings of class, as was familiar to British society.¹⁰⁷ Many of the early migrant families had never associated with the land in which they had become wealthy, as the new definitions of class had marginalised them,¹⁰⁸ and in their generational association with "Home", they perpetuated a sentimental version of the British way of life.¹⁰⁹ Strangely, "expatriate Britons," many of them born in New Zealand, had a well developed sense of the isolation of their location "but at the same time they are very jealous of their independence."¹¹⁰ This could be explained by Erik Olssen's identification of the strong commitment of Caversham "masters" (employers and the self-employed) to the ideology of Labour as statement of "moral purpose."¹¹¹ Similarly while white collar workers were very interested in Britain as a country, they could quite easily be critical of "Homies" who breached New Zealand's social codes;

It is a profound mistake to suppose that overseas loyalty is incompatible with sharp criticism of England. The colonial is like a man who scolds his wife but will not allow anybody else to say a word against her. The arrogance of English travellers, and their expectation of impossible comforts in a new country; the set ways of the Old Country; the comments of colonials who have visited England and observed perhaps with more zeal than judgement; the general disposition of youth to think itself wiser than its elders - these and other things create what at times is a highly critical attitude.¹¹²

While British migrants were in general considered by the government to be the right type of migrant, settled families, especially those in "frontier" situations, regarded them more as raw material which needed to be moulded; naive "homies" who should be grateful for the opportunities they were offered. Immigrants to the Canterbury region were relatively small in number - Stevan

114.

¹⁰⁷ Olssen, p.228.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.229.

¹⁰⁹ J. Graham, "Settler Society", in G. Rice (ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, (2nd. edn., Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1992), p.133.

¹¹⁰ *The Press*, 21 September 1929, p.15.

¹¹¹ Olssen, p.229.

¹¹² Mulgan, *Home*, p.13.

Eldred-Grigg estimates there to have been as few as 9,000 to the region between the end of the war and 1926 - and as such they were a subject of some interest.¹¹³ Canterbury like many of the other provinces needed labour, but feared disorder and economic instability. "Cantab", a Cambridge educated farm labourer was surprised to notice this attitude;

When I left the back-blocks I saw the manager of the stock company, to whom we were first entrusted. He was the soul of courtesy. . . But from what I gathered now, prospects were no better on the land than at Home, and for small capitalists definitely worse. . . He talked as if the height of my ambition in this land was to become a regularly paid, efficient worker on the land; and he desired that I should enjoy the "privileges of a new country." ¹¹⁴

Over time the "man's man" stereotype changed to include his urban-dwelling brothers as the itinerant nature of work declined. A new ethic emphasising hard work, discipline and self-help developed where the rough diamond principle had predominated.¹¹⁵ In the interwar period especially, the declining birth-rate and the increasing cohort of women in the marriageable age group drew an increasing number of men to the altar, and legislation restricting their enlistment, and their hours of drinking at public bars, served to keep them at the matrimonial fire place.¹¹⁶

Working class neighbourhood groups and extended families were of great importance in providing social and material support, and extending and maintaining cultural mores. Interestingly, Elizabeth Roberts writing of Britain, notes that it is almost impossible to distinguish who were or were not considered to be family by working-class people; in some cases an obligation was felt to a wide network of kin beyond the nuclear family.¹¹⁷ Roberts argues that when an extended family migrated as a group, the move could serve to strengthen their old association in a new environment. However, if the familiar

¹¹³ S. Eldred-Grigg, *A New History of Canterbury*, (Dunedin, John McIndoe Ltd., 1982), pp.94-95.

¹¹⁴ *The Press*, 14 September 1929, p.15

¹¹⁵ Phillips, p.49.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* Chapter 5: The family man, 1920-50.

¹¹⁷ S. Roberts, *A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1984), pp.169-70.

migrated as a nuclear unit, then ties with those left behind were often broken except for the exchange of letters and parcels.

The importance of social control functions in a relatively new society like New Zealand were very important in assisting the adjustment of migrants. Religious faith, that is, a 'transcultural belief system,' can play an important role in re-orienting people towards their new circumstances, and in fact can provide great stability.¹¹⁸ Sociologist Robert Moore argues, in his study of three Durham mining villages, that Protestant sects were in fact "training grounds for working class leaders."¹¹⁹ The Methodist faith advocated the full use of human talent in a similar way to which working class society valued individuals by their ability to work, and certainly the centrality of an individual's occupation to his or her life is something that does not require verification. Religious faith gave weight to the pressure to find work and a social niche. In this environment of moral obligation the economic disaster of the 1920s had special impact; many were in the prime of their working lives and faced either unemployment or employment at low wages. It is unsurprising that there were large-scale migrations from the mining villages of Durham to other parts of the world.¹²⁰

In a somewhat different way, the Catholicism brought to New Zealand by Irish immigrants encouraged its parishioners to take on a diminishing connection with the church, once settled in the country.¹²¹ While initially colourful and vocal, the church's failure to develop the Irish variant in the decades to follow left the colonials little indication of how to develop a religion relevant to themselves, except for a highly symbolic regime of "mindless acceptance, slavish imitation and abasement, sycophancy and parasitism."¹²²

¹¹⁸ J. J. Mol. "Churches and Immigrants," Research Group for European Migration Problems Bulletin, Vol. 9, supplement 5, May 1961, , p.8.

¹¹⁹ R. Moore, Pit-men, Preachers and Politics. the effects of Methodism 'a Durham mining community, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.202.

¹²¹ O'Farrell, Chapter 4.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.133.

This lack of guidance may in part have contributed to the openness with which residents of the Dominions viewed the outside world, following closely news and writings from abroad, as opposed to European nationals and their introspective approach.¹²³

Interwar New Zealand may well have acted as a revolutionary magnet to 'ideologues' attracted by 'glimpses of a world remade', and practical-minded 'pit radicals' from Britain, and as such has become the subject of some discussion.¹²⁴ The dominion had often been represented by expatriate Britons as "a working man's paradise" where individuals could have all the trappings of gentility while still remaining a worker.¹²⁵ The collective class politics and class conflict provided by what James Belich calls "social settlers", that is, people who viewed themselves as permanent members of the working class, were potentially explosive.¹²⁶ Such individuals were not locked into the political and social system by a desire for promotion and betterment and thus could cause the dissent considered so undesirable amongst the dominion's policy makers, to erupt. Former Flock House boy Jack Robinson was one such individual. Firmly committed to workers rights in his later life, he would fervently turn up to electoral meetings, but if he was patronised had no compunction about throwing rotten fish.¹²⁷

Consideration has been given by Len Richardson to the potential provided by the mining towns to those hoping to spread socialist fervour.¹²⁸ Historian Donald Denoon is, however, loath to admit the inheritance of British national characteristics, preferring to argue that while foreign aspirations may have had some force, they do not explain the predating of some measures of colonial

¹²³ Ibid., p.137.

¹²⁴ L. Richardson, Coal, Class and Community. The United Mineworkers of New Zealand, 1880-1960, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1995), pp.15, 108.

¹²⁵ Belich, pp.328-330.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.330.

¹²⁷ Interview with Rosemary Purse by J. Malcolm, 26 June 1995. Notes in author's collection.

¹²⁸ Richardson, pp.87-125.

political development to British changes and in fact can obscure the study of events.¹²⁹

Arguably, however many migrants of this period arrived in the new world with an ideological axe to grind and never made it to the isolated communities for which they were intended, or if they did, were employed there for a short amount of time. Instead unionists like Jock Mathieson stayed within the city environment and were attracted to local politics.¹³⁰ Similarly, London-born Jack Locke, after a stint as a farm labourer at Taupiri, was attracted to the bright lights of Auckland and the Communist Party there in 1936 or 1938.¹³¹ Often, like Jock Mathieson, these individuals became embroiled in industrial actions, and while arguably they may have been motivated by long-standing beliefs, they also served to articulate and direct deep-rooted discontent.¹³² "Homies" gained a reputation for complaint; they became unionists, socialists and politicians. Ironically the restrictions placed on immigration in the mid 1930s were the work of three "British" Australian migrants, Peter Fraser, Michael Joseph Savage and Walter Nash.

There is some evidence to suggest that the government was interested in the ideological stances of its immigrants, as political agitation and dissent in the community came to the fore during the Depression. For example the riots which broke out in Dunedin and in Auckland in 1932 prompted the cities and municipalities to empower larger numbers of special constable with wider discretionary powers and the legislature passed a number of coercive measures in response, in particular the abolishment of the 'stand down' week for unemployed.¹³³ In March 1932 the Legislative Council began to negotiate

¹²⁹ D. Denoon, "The Political Economy of Labour Migration to Settler Societies: Australasia, Southern Africa, and Southern South America between 1890 and 1914" in S. Marks and P. Richardson (eds) *International Labour Migration. Historical Perspectives*, (Hounslow, Maurice Temple, 1984), p.194.

¹³⁰ Jock Mathieson emigrated to New Zealand in 1919 and took up work at the Kaiapoi Woollen Mills. See author's interview with A. Mathieson, 16 June 1995. Copy in author's possession.

¹³¹ Interview with Jack Locke by Jo Malcolm, 20 June 1995.

¹³² Richardson, p.87.

¹³³ R. M. Burdon, *The New Dominion. A Social and Political History of New Zealand 1918-39*,

immigration restrictions to supplement the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act of 1920. Concern was focused on impeding a so-called "influx" of persons who were likely to become a charge on the public, namely "Communists who foment disorder among the unemployed".¹³⁴ The action was one of social control, but it illustrated the government's preoccupation with the potential for protest and subversive behaviour.

Arguably, the dislocation of the workforce and the issue of conscription had contributed to the spectre of a possible resurrection of unionism in the coal fields after 1913.¹³⁵ In effect what occurred was the development of more sophisticated voluntary organisations like trade unions, almost as if the drive to industrialisation had not yet been completed. Furthermore, the force with which the heavy hand of the law came down upon striking miners and those who supported them became a sore point with sympathetic audiences,¹³⁶ and appeared to be affirming the settler ethic of 'getting on with business' rather than 'whingeing'. The clash occurred between new immigrants who approached their new life with a view to finding the best possible way of promoting change, and with the established community, who considered change to the status quo to be out of the question.¹³⁷

In retrospect, Britain's young healthy workforce became different but similar through transplantation. As Homi Bhabha has argued in *The Location of Culture*, the colonial "mimic" man eventually moves beyond the imitation of imperial dominance, so that the reflection is displaced by partial reflection.¹³⁸ While in principle all "white" inhabitants within the imperial ideal could

(Wellington, A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1965), pp.144-45.

¹³⁴ Confidential Statement prepared by the Comptroller of Customs, 17 March 1932, in A.J.C.P.5325:388, I0820/3-10, New Zealand immigration restrictions; barring of communists.

¹³⁵ Richardson, p.156.

¹³⁶ Ex-miner Bob Semple (who was later to become a cabinet minister) was imprisoned for his sympathetic view in 1916, and on a speaking tour later was to comment on the inequality of unionist's treatment. See Richardson, p.175.

¹³⁷ Bert Roth noted the hostility of some blue collar workers to British immigrants who came out during the depression and undercut award wages, in an interview by Doug Crosado, 26 May 1986, Oral History Centre, Wellington.

¹³⁸ H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London, Routledge, 1994), p.86.

identify with imperial objectives, in reality the social conditions within the New Zealand microcosm had a new set of criteria. The distant spectre of Britain was a pleasant identification point and was a useful pool for finding labour, but in fact many of the Dominion's settled inhabitants came to find that British imports were not necessarily useful on New Zealand's farms. "New chums" were ignorant of the requirements of New Zealand society; they lacked the versatility of their New Zealand equivalents, were unprepared for the conditions, and gained a reputation for complaining about injustices. What is more many came with the expectation of self-improvement, or of greater politicisation than they had had at "home", and were unprepared for the relative conservatism of the New Zealand governments. To their credit, many of the support systems of United Kingdom society, that is social and religious groupings, survived in the Dominion environment, as did political radicalism. The characteristics that made for successful settlers were employment related, such as flexibility, tenacity of purpose, and a non-critical nature, and were not necessarily or exclusively found in British immigrants.

The principle of land settlement and the agrarian ideal did not fare so well. With the benefit of geographical distance British idealists had envisaged post-World War One New Zealand to be a fertile environment for larger scale land settlement. They had little understanding of actual shortages of land for settlement, nor had they any warning of the effect of economic depression on tentative first-time farmers operating on borrowed capital. Nevertheless, the New Zealand government was happy to welcome farmers and farm labourers as assisted immigrants under the joint funding of the Empire Settlement Act. Restrictions on assisting these "types" were to coincide with the first economic depression of 1927, indicating the declining influence of the rural community on governmental policy. Increasingly little notice was taken of rural demands for immigrant farmer labourers, especially as the industrial sector developed.

While the policy was not necessarily one of disinterest, it was one of non-interference.

One might view the exercise of ex-service personnel migration to New Zealand as a final testing ground for the formulation of land settlement policy. It might also be seen as an area in which New Zealand brought to life a definitive policy which would not be overridden by Great Britain or by powerful interest groups. New Zealand citizens had a previously existing right to employment and accommodation in New Zealand which overrode those of British citizens, and New Zealand interest groups emphasised this. For Britain the situation illustrates attempts to bind the Dominions to Empire through the creation of a capitalist yeomanry and through the strengthening and refreshing of the white dominion population. In addition the export of veterans from World War One served to take pressure off the British government in terms not only of public relations, but also through fear of rebellion and through the very real strain created by population pressure. Nevertheless in this situation the imperial government also found itself constrained by Dominion governments' reluctance to take the mother country's left-overs. The Dominions when approached were enthusiastic but vague.

The I.F.P.S. provided the funding that New Zealand in particular was lacking, and thus some imperial soldiers did finally arrive between 1920 and 1922. The economic situation, however, was dire enough to override New Zealand's desires to take British returned soldiers, and ensure that the scheme was short-lived. Shipping shortages served to highlight New Zealand's isolation and indeed proved to be a very real problem. The threat of limited housing availability was taken very seriously by the New Zealand government, and while they did their utmost to find accommodation for new immigrants, the issue was a useful justification to avoid the extension of immigration commitments.

Chapter four: The suitably young: juvenile immigration to New Zealand, 1919-39.

The history of the United Kingdom's child migration schemes illustrates a belief in the advantages of a rural colonial upbringing over that in Britain. "Child" migrants were placed in indentures around the empire, in day labouring, servitude, shepherding and farm work, and other positions that embodied the agrarian paradise lost for nostalgic British policymakers.¹ In Canada, Dr Barnardo's Homes welcomed British orphans. Other schemes, such as the Fairbridge Farm School in Western Australia, the Big Brother schemes and those run by the various churches, have also had considerable histories. The Canadian example in particular was heralded by British imperialists as demonstrating the success of child migration in the nineteenth century.² By comparison, immigration to New Zealand was never as substantial, nor was it a scheme encouraged early. Despite this, policy regarding the encouragement of "children" illustrates a great deal in common regarding what was hoped for New Zealand, both at "Home" and locally. This is exemplified by consideration of the assisted immigration schemes for young people in the interwar period in relation to the traditional migration in New Zealand, and the implications of the perceived suitability of youth.

From the nineteenth century the decision to send British children abroad was one which required a certain discourse regarding social categorisation; a discourse which survived until the end of child migration schemes in the latter half of the twentieth century. The primary premise involved in sending juvenile migrants from a seemingly over-crowded industrial Britain, was that it was easier for urban children to adjust to a new life elsewhere, than for adults

¹E. Hadley, "Natives in a Strange Land: The Philanthropic Discourse of Juvenile Emigration in Mid-nineteenth-century England," *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 33, no. 3, 1990, p.430.

²B. M. Coldrey, "Child Migration and the Catholic Church," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 79, parts 3 and 4, 1993, p.200.

who would pine for city life. The youngsters fitted a model of pauperism on geographic boundaries which served to justify their suitability for the less demanding lifestyle of the colonies.³ The boundaries of pauperism were themselves viewed as adjustable. The juvenile vagrant's very "unsuitability" for the sophisticated conditions of an industrial community was perceived as rendering him or her appropriate for naturalisation elsewhere in the Empire. These children were biological tools which had been mistakenly placed in the wrong place.⁴ There was a feeling that success was assured in the colonies for the lower classes of Britain, although more cynical commentators could view the scenario as a case of "out of sight, out of mind".

The same people who regard our village poor as inherently incapable of managing a bit of land are the first to extol and even exaggerate the efficiency and prosperity of this very class when it comes to emigration. These same men, we are told, do wonders in New Zealand or Australia. They could earn a good living after stubbing up tree roots from farms of 160 in Canada, but in England they do not possess enough intelligence to look after five or ten acres! To some members of our richer and more comfortable classes the English poor appear feeble and vicious except when, by transference to the colonies, they are suddenly metamorphosed into "Empire builders". . . .⁵

Other perceptions of child emigration involved a concern for overpopulation. While it was hoped that emigrants would breed fruitfully in the colonies, authorities worried about the excessive and premature sexual activity of the juvenile indigent population.⁶ A delay in action was a threat to the moral future of Britain, an ethical consideration which was carried out in legislation. In 1850 the Poor Law Amendment Act allowed guardians of parishes to authorise the transportation of "Orphans and deserted Children" who were under the age of sixteen, on the justification that it would save the parish involved further expense for the maintenance of the child, that it would

³Hadley, p.431.

⁴Ibid., p.432.

⁵Bennett, pp.166-67.

⁶Hadley, p.435.

contribute to a decrease in pressure on the home labour market, and that it would provide a better existence for the child.⁷

Child migration: a contested discourse

While imperialism was the dominant national ideology from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, so the promotion of "evangelical decency, the work ethic and imperial expansion" among Victorian boyhood was complementary.⁸ Indeed, by the interwar period the main assumptions behind the emigration of children were much as they had been in the nineteenth century. The decision to send large numbers of children to strange lands away from family and familiar environment was justifiable in light of the benefits to the child themselves. In view of this, and of assumed increasing overpopulation, the colonies promised havens of good air and good food. While mid-nineteenth century discourse had embodied juvenile migrants in agrarian rhetoric as objects to be nurtured, the principles of husbandry had also extended into interest in their labour in the rural parts of the empire.⁹ Moreover, the "emerging agrarian economies" of the colonies were an ideal opportunity to relocate the excess of working class children who were well versed in the entrepreneurial skills of industrial Britain. Within the dominions themselves there was a certain element of support for the malleable child migrant, which shall be discussed later.¹⁰ With British citizens, New Zealand cities were the optimal opportunity of empire; the point made in a glossy pamphlet discussing the benefits of Christchurch;

Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands,

⁷I. Pinchbeck, and M. Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, Vol. II, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp.554-55.

⁸J. A. Mangan, "Noble specimens of manhood: schoolboy literature and the creation of a colonial chivalric code," in J. Richards (ed) *Imperialism and juvenile literature*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989), p.174.

⁹Hadley, p.434.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p.431.

Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands,
There the great city stands.¹¹

Arguably the environment offered to immigrant children in New Zealand was markedly better than what they might receive in Britain. The system of farm schools, under which most "child" migration schemes operated in New Zealand and which will be discussed later in this chapter, gave children training under ideal conditions, and most farm placements were made under supervision. Former pupils were able to return to the farm school if the placement was not satisfactory or if they needed a holiday.

Equally important, juvenile emigration was perceived as an investment in Empire which would bind the inhabitants of its furthest reaches, consolidating and maintaining links.¹² In New Zealand the official argument supporting British migration held that the redistribution of British people and resources reinforced the links with Britain, as it would guarantee the maintenance of a high standard of living with the advantages of racial uniformity which was consistent with Britain.¹³ Such was the talk of the official supporters of empire; politicians, preachers, the editors of newspapers, school teachers, and other "pillars of the community."¹⁴ Children were assumed to be an easily moulded resource that could be readily shifted to areas requiring more population. They were considered mobile, cheap, relatively scarce, and exploitable. What better way to promote inter-dominion cooperation than to ensure that British hands were working for the Empire. Leo Amery, Secretary of State for the colonies, stated his concerns about the future in the House of Commons in 1924:

¹¹Exert from a Whitman song published in Canterbury Progress League pamphlet, Of all countries in the world this is where you would choose to labour and live, (1921).

¹²Coldrey, p.200.

¹³Borrie, p.157.

¹⁴K. Sinclair, The Native Born. The Origins of New Zealand Nationalism, (Massey Memorial Lecture, 1986), p.9.

The more we can widen our economic basis and spread our people in the Empire the greater our insurance against fluctuations in the world outside....¹⁵

The Empire provided an acceptable face for child migration which made even the movement of orphans acceptable because of the magic of "Britishness". For example, a proposal raised in 1922 to bring out Jewish Ukrainian orphans had not succeeded because of restrictions levied upon the immigration of orphans.¹⁶ These orphans were required by the government to have sponsors who would accept responsibility for their maintenance. Yet with relative ease a large number of British "children", whether orphaned or otherwise, made the trip without question.

A linguistic device which allowed Empire to legitimate child migration was the notion of an Imperial family, the duty to which was an ongoing commitment. The future of the Empire relied upon constant reminders to young "Britons" of their imperial obligation. In actuality the families were in some cases real. In the Census of 1921, only 19.52 percent of the New Zealand population was actually British-born, but an overwhelming 98.37 percent were born within the British Empire.¹⁷ Many of them had contact with British relations. Emphatically there was "no better "finishing school" for an English schoolboy than a visit to the Dominions."¹⁸ Amery was to remind New Zealanders of their role in this relationship in an address to pupils of Waitaki High School:

In going out from school to become citizens of this splendid young country, destined to play a leading part in the Empire, as Britain did in earlier days in the history of Europe, you are going out not as citizens of New Zealand only, but of the whole Empire, citizens of a worldwide Commonwealth. Wherever you go in that Commonwealth, if you should happen to leave New Zealand, and if your career takes

¹⁵ Hansard Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons, Vol. 174, 28 May 1924, col. 570.

¹⁶ L. M. Goldman, The History of the Jews in New Zealand, (Wellington, A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1958), p.212.

¹⁷ The Census of New Zealand 1921 - Birthplaces.

¹⁸ The Press, 3 January 1933, p.3. Indeed even in times of economic crisis, school boy tours were still conducted. In 1929 and 1933 the Public School Empire Tour Committee sent parties of approximately thirty Public school boys to the Dominion for educational tours.

you, as it has taken many men, outside your country - wherever you go you will land not as strangers, not as aliens, but as fellow subjects and fellow citizens.¹⁹

It was on these assumptions that a discourse supporting the emigration of young Britons was based and lasted for two centuries. The early focus was on inhabiting the empty frontiers of rural Canada, and then later on the smaller dominions. The phenomenon did however begin to change, and as numbers migrating dwindled, the rhetoric of Empire became more significant, not least, because the significance of children began to come to the fore. As such its justification, that of familial duty, was at odds with a growing ideology surrounding the validity of the childhood experience.²⁰ By the twentieth century the changing balance of population began to redirect the movement of children who would normally have been sent to other parts of the Empire, keeping many of them within Britain.²¹ However, while the criteria for emigration were changing the trend itself was to continue. Migration undertaken under the auspices of the Catholic Church to Australia only ended in 1967.²²

Before juvenile migration schemes to New Zealand had been given official governmental approval, the Dominions Royal Commission of 1917 enthused over the benefits of sending underprivileged children to farming destinations within the Empire.²³ The attention being given to the young unemployed in Britain by church and philanthropic societies is thought to have forced the matter before the authorities in London and in the Dominions.²⁴ Later, L. S. Amery voiced his view:

¹⁹L. S. Amery, *The Empire in the New Era. Speeches during an Empire Tour, 1927-1928*, (London, Edward Arnold and Co., 1928), p.186. The Salvation Army also understood the links between migration and the "Empire's heirs". *The War Cry*, January 16, 1926, p.3.

²⁰See pp.134-137.

²¹Pinchbeck, and Hewitt, p.581.

²²Coldrey, p.199.

²³ Dominions Royal Commission, *Final Report 1917*, (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918), p.242-254.

²⁴ Borrie, p.163.

But what is true is that to whatever extent the movement of our people overseas relieves unemployment, it relieves it in a very satisfactory manner.... We have to advance steadily, though I agree we should try to advance more rapidly than at present. The great thing is that we should do it on right lines and from the right point of view, as simply social reform writ large and dealing with the whole problem of national life on a wider scale.²⁵

This is not to state, however, that the phenomenon of child migration was as sanitary as it might initially seem. By the twentieth century authorities were well aware of a rather odious history relating to juvenile migration schemes in particular, where the protocol and the conditions were questionable. Victorian social organisation and reforming had confused the status of poor or "unemployed" children who were transported to the colonies. Were they embittered adults or innocent minors, deserving British subjects needing protection or viable labour?²⁶ More often than not distinctions had been made on moral grounds with the implication that poverty entailed delinquency. The philanthropic intent was focused more on the decongestion of Britain's streets in the wake of population explosion and industrialisation, than on the welfare of its charges. In the era of state-directed and supervised child migration schemes, British politicians were anxious to avoid the mistakes of their predecessors in recognising the potential of children. In the House of Commons the Empire Settlement Bill 1937 drew fierce objections to the renewal of child migration from at least one member;

I am opposed to child migration being restarted. I do not wish to encourage the shovelling of little children overseas. . . These Poor Law children are of equal importance as human beings as our own children, and we ought to take as much care of them.²⁷

In the early 1920s however, when the issue of "child" migration to New Zealand and to the other dominions was raised, the counter-rhetoric of concern for children was not of serious concern. Instead, the nineteenth century

²⁵ Hansard. Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons. Vol. 174, 28 May, 1924, col. 570.

²⁶ Hadley, p.415.

²⁷ Mr Lunn in the House of Commons, 25 January 1937, col.607, in Hansard's Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons, Vols 317-327, November 1936 - July 30 1937.

agrarian ideals and the criteria of pauperism prevailed. As late as 1937 British imperialists were concerned with the classification of "state" children for the purposes of migration.²⁸

The New Zealand perspective.

Traditionally, farming families in New Zealand utilised the labour of their children and their wives to operate their farms, as well as the relatively cheap labour of a floating itinerant workforce. But in recent years the numbers of willing workers had declined. For these reasons, the rural community had a vested interest in attracting labour. In turn, farmers' influence on provincial and central governments made it likely that state-assisted immigration programmes would be particularly generous in their conditions for agricultural and domestic workers.²⁹

The concern for rural labour shortages came from two social developments. Firstly, the decline in New Zealand's birth-rate threatened to affect the numbers of cheap male and female labour available to farmers, because of a general decline in the replacement rate of the New Zealand population. The nominal rate of natural increase of population, that is the excess of births over deaths, had fallen from 31.19 per 1,000 of mean population in 1870 to 9.07 in 1932³⁰ (see figure 5). Clearly the capacity and the treatment of children was of great importance when population growth and replacement became issues of concern. Indeed, if the country could not produce enough of its own children, where better to look than Britain? The matter was considered serious enough to warrant public concern. In the Christchurch *Press* correspondent "XYZ"

²⁸Mr Kinloch-Cooke "The Migration of State Children" in A. J. C. P.5420:705, M.523/1-2, Juvenile migration: general.

²⁹S. Constantine, "Immigration, Population and New Zealand's Destiny", British Review of New Zealand Studies, No. 3, December 1990, p.19.

³⁰N. Z. O. Y., 1934.

sparked an ongoing debate by casting aspersions on the characters of New Zealand's "white" breeding population;

A young country like New Zealand should surely be able to increase its population without immigration. To my mind large families are not encouraged - rather the opposite. . . I think we should be taught to help the people with large families in every possible way, and we should teach our children to look on the childless married couple with contempt, as after all said and done, our children will have to fight to protect the childless married woman and the selfish childless woman will be the first to say the other woman's sons should go and fight in the event of war.³¹

Importantly, it should be noted that the decline in population concerned only the Pakeha elements in New Zealand society. Maori fertility remained at high levels until the early 1960s.³² In itself the very stability of Maori birth-rates may have appeared threatening to those holding the balance of power, because of the increase it caused in the Maori proportion of the population. At the turn of the century it had been predicted that the Maori race was gradually becoming extinct, but by the 1930s the fallacy of this assumption was becoming apparent.³³ The census' closely following the numbers of New Zealand citizens who were full or part Maori; between the 1926 and 1936 census, there was an 11.77 percent increase in individuals with Maori heritage, as opposed to an 10.93 percent increase in non-Maori.³⁴

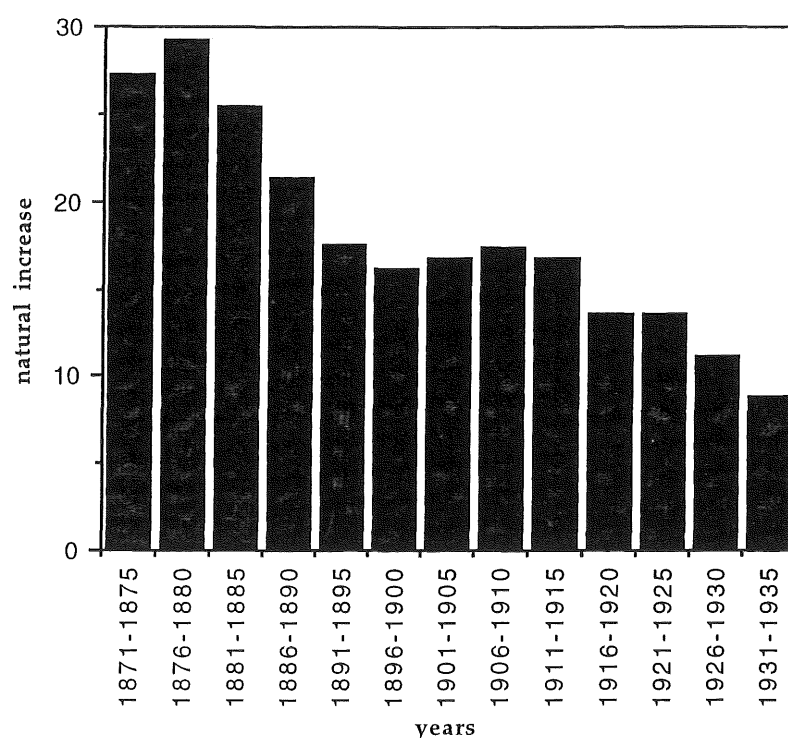
³¹The Press, 22 October 1935, p.8. See also Deputation to the Prime Minister regarding migration, 18 February 1938 in L 1 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association, 1936-55. National Archives; The Dominion, 10 January 1938, "We Must Have More People" in L 1, 22/1/3 Suggestions about state-aided migration, 1936-46, National Archives.

³²I. Pool, "The Demographic Transition of the New Zealand family" in B. M. Niculescu (ed) Population Change and Social and Economic Policy in the 1990s, (Wellington, 1991), p.9.

³³M. King, "Between Two Worlds," in G. Rice (ed) The Oxford History of New Zealand, (2nd edn), (Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1992), p.286.

³⁴Census of New Zealand 1936, p.iii.

Figure 5: The declining birthrate.



Source: New Zealand Official Yearbook 1939.

The second point of concern related to the urbanisation of young industrial New Zealand. A large number of young people were showing a propensity to seek employment in the expanding towns and cities, and this was concerning to a country whose economy was based on rural production.¹ Children were traditionally perceived as important parts of the workforce in farming areas, and there was an increasing reluctance among New Zealand children to work on farms. In the wake of this urban drain, the farming community was enthusiastic to reclaim its share of youthful workers. In towns children were economically less productive and created higher costs, at least until the statutory prerequisites for their education had been met. So by comparison,

¹ Annual report on the Department of Immigration, 1931, Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives, (hereafter as A.J.H.R.), D-9, p.1; N.Z.P.D., Vol.236, October 3, 1933, p.246.

they were more valuable in the rural areas where the cost of their lost labour could be offset by the imposition of chores outside school hours.³⁶ The solution of importing British youths was a stop gap intended to fill a vacancy rather than a permanent solution addressing the problem. There was no reason why British-born youngsters should not also follow their New Zealand-born contemporaries in accepting the benefits of an urban lifestyle.

Very little could be done to offset this problem domestically, although some attempt was made by young people's organisations within New Zealand to enthuse girls and boys about the patriotic virtues of good hard labour. The Board of Agriculture, encouraged by the Taranaki District Farmers' Union, and reports from overseas, urged national agricultural and pastoral associations to foster the formation of Boys Agricultural Clubs.³⁷ The school cadet scheme which had been founded in 1900, tutored boys in such valuable imperial aims as "Citizenship", "Advantage of Physical Fitness", "Patriotism", "Self-Discipline" and "Debt Owing to One's Country".³⁸ Similarly, Boy Scouts and the Girl Peace Scouts who were later known as the Girl Guides, inculcated the virtues of obedience, loyalty, self-reliance, observation and the value of outdoor skills.³⁹ These groups fostered a certain reverence in the country's rural attributes. As has been discussed in chapter three, the appeal of rural life was not sufficiently offset by the low wages and long hours that rural labour demanded. When the interest raised failed to stem the tide of demand for rural labour, the other main alternative was the importation of British farm boys.

Nationality was specific to the issue. In New Zealand the young migrants were regarded among policy-makers as desirable. There did not exist a view of young British migrants as foreign, as there did with other migrants, but rather as a form of easily assimilable raw material;

³⁶Toynbee, p.27.

³⁷Report of Board of Agriculture, A. J. H. R., H-29A, 1922, p.4.

³⁸Sinclair, A Destiny Apart., p.229.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p.228.

There is no doubt that this class of migration under proper conditions is of immense advantage both to the migrants themselves and to the Dominion. They grow up from tender years accustomed to New Zealand conditions, and if placed upon the land they have not nearly so great an inclination to drift back to the towns as have older immigrants whose habits have been formed by previous environment. On the other hand, the Dominion, by training the children in its schools and placing the youths on the land according to its own conditions, gains citizens of the true New Zealand spirit.⁴⁰

The pre-history of child migration schemes in New Zealand

While the need had existed since the start of European settlement for people capable of adjusting to the colonial situation, the first experiment in the emigration of "children" trained for New Zealand occupations was attempted in 1911. From the beginning, the definition of New Zealand's imported youths as "children" was somewhat misleading. The scheme was an unofficial one initiated by British philanthropist T. E. Sedgwick who brought out a contingent of fifty inexperienced "boys" between the ages of 16 and 20 to work on farms. The trial was deemed to be a success, with eighty percent of the young men continuing in rural occupations, and all considered to be self-sufficient.⁴¹ After the Sedgwick scheme there was a great deal of interest in the potential of these migrants on New Zealand's farms;

Farmers as firm adherents of the catching them young theory, have been watching the progress of the boys with the greatest interest. Now that the capabilities of the Home city-bred youth as an embryonic agriculturalist have been placed beyond a shadow of doubt, they are agitating very strongly for the sending out of more boys.⁴²

In January 1914, Sedgwick approached the New Zealand government to bring out a further party of two hundred boys in conjunction with the Department of Labour and the Immigration Department but the offer was declined without further comment.⁴³ Instead two parties of fifty farm boys

⁴⁰Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, A.J.H.R., D-9, 1927, p.2.

⁴¹The Press, 22 January 1914, p.4.

⁴²The Press, 19 June 1912, p.3.

⁴³T. E. Sedgwick, Lads for the Empire, with notes on other phases of imperial migration, (London, P. S. King and Son, 1914), pp.20-21.

aged between 14 and 16 disembarked in January and March 1914 under a new government scheme. In this scheme the farmers employing the boys each advanced £8 towards their passage money and the Government paid the balance.⁴⁴ Of the boys involved, sixty percent had a "rudimentary knowledge of farming", while the remaining younger boys had "the physique necessary to fit them for learning farmwork in New Zealand".

At this stage there was an attempt to guarantee the working conditions of the boys involved. But the matter became somewhat confused. The Prime Minister, W. F. Massey, set a minimum wage of 7s. 6d. a week for the first year, with the effect that twenty-seven of the first intake of boys elected to break the conditions under which they were employed and brought to New Zealand.⁴⁵ The news sparked comments as to the returns of this kind of investment among the farming community. Mr Sedgwick and other detractors were not sympathetic, but the editor of the Press dismissed the comments as sour grapes;

They seem to have been very well selected, and are much bigger and stronger than was expected. It would also seem that many of them have had farming experience in England. If so, we are quite certain that they will not be very long before they get what is approximately their market value. Mr Sedgwick, who has had experience of this kind of work, who naturally prefers his own scheme to that of the Government and who, therefore, is quite impartial (sic), says that if the boys who have elected to break away from their agreements had trusted their prospective employers they would have found, as the Sedgwick boys found, that the minimum rates would not have been adhered to, and they would have received what they were worth. A farmer in this country who thinks that he will be able to keep in his employ a lad at less than his fair market rate of wages is a fool. Naturally however, when he agrees to feed, clothe and pay for three years a boy from the other side of the world whom he has never seen, he wishes to limit the amount of his liability in case he finds himself saddled with a loafer or an incompetent.⁴⁶

After the end of the war New Zealand began to display a healthy demand for immigrants to replace the wastages of war, and in 1922, the Empire Settlement Act gave statutory justification to these desires. The Act empowered the Secretary of State to act in conjunction with the Dominions governments or with public authorities of public or private organisations either

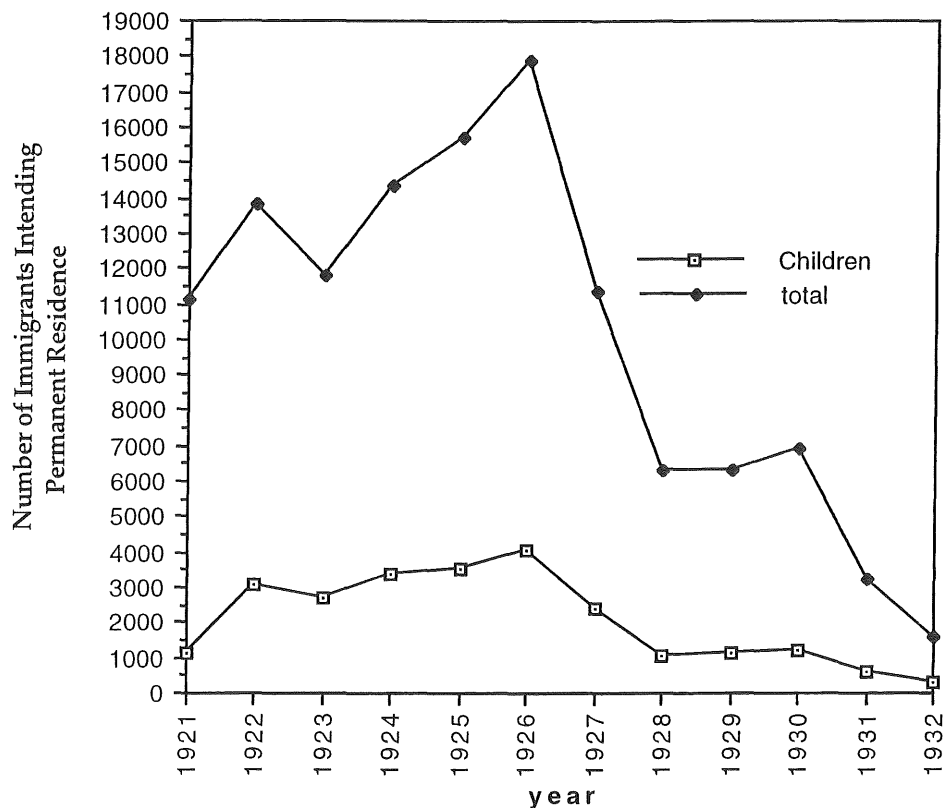
⁴⁴Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, A.J.H.R., D-9, 1914, p.3; Comments of Mr Massey, in The Press, 22 January 1914, p.4.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶The Press, 22 January 1914, p.6.

in the United Kingdom or the Dominions. It entailed them to design and implement the carrying out of agreed schemes regarding "joint assistance to *suitable persons in the United Kingdom who intend to settle in any part of His Majesty's Overseas Dominions.*"⁴⁷

figure 6:



Source: N Z OY 1923- 1935.

The New Zealand case suggests one type of "suitable persons". Historically the complexion of migration to New Zealand was primarily mature. Farmers, labourers, miners and domestics made the long and mostly irreversible journey to the Antipodes. In the years after World War One there was an unmistakable increase in child migrants, so that by late 1922 migrants under the nominated and overseas settlement schemes made up a remarkably even 2,176 men, 2,744 women and 2,085 children.⁴⁸ In the year 1922-23, child and

⁴⁷The Empire Settlement Act, 1922, 12 and 13 Geo V., ch.13, s.1 (1). Authors own italics.

⁴⁸Annual Report of the Department of Immigration, 1922, A.J.H.R., D-9, p.2.

juvenile immigrants made up thirty-three percent of the whole volume of migrants, and in the next two years remained at a steady thirty-two and thirty percent respectively.⁴⁹ In the total number of migrants who intended permanent residence, irrespective of assistance, children made up a figure consistent with general immigration trends (see figure 6). This relative evenness remained constant until the late twenties, when numbers of women and children advancing under assistance began to exceed men, and numbers of assisted migrants began to weaken in contrast to full-fare migrants, until the Immigration Department's demise in 1935. The proportion of children being assisted was unusually high; a factor indicative of encouragement on the part of the Imperial and Dominion governments.⁵⁰ Special fares simply served to single out the demand for young workers.

The New Zealand government was welcoming to very young migrants, whether they came in family groups or prescribed programmes. But this was a policy that would change over time. As discussed in chapter two, under the Empire Settlement Act's provisions for 1924, children under the age of seventeen could travel free, while those between the ages of seventeen and nineteen could do so at reduced rates. Most young migrants would be accompanied by their parents, thus requiring no social assistance in their upbringing, however those that travelled without guardians on the various scheme were especially flexible in the view of policy-makers and employers, and thus a more readily useful labour pool⁵¹ A large number of young people under the age of nineteen came to New Zealand under various "child" migration schemes but the phenomenon was greatly affected by the economic state of New Zealand and in the Depression rural calls for the renewal of

⁴⁹Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, 1923, A.J.H.R., D-9, p.1; Annual Report on the Dept. of Immigration, , A. J. H. R., D-9, 1924, p.2; Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, A. J. H. R., D-9, 1925, p.5.

⁵⁰Under the Empire Settlement Act, young people who were nominated could travel third-class passage free. See appendix 3.

⁵¹ Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, 1923, A. J. H. R., D-9, p.1.

juvenile labour were largely ignored. 2,259 young people were brought out between 1924 and 1931, on at least six assisted schemes, although it has been boasted that in the five years between 1922 and 1927, approximately fifteen thousand child and juvenile migrants came out, many of them in family groups.⁵² No more child migration schemes occurred after this, but throughout the 1930s the schemes remained a subject for discussion.⁵³ Of the "boys" assisted under the banner of farm work, certain schemes predominated (see figure 7).

For those young people arriving without family or friends, the farming community played an integral part. The rural community in New Zealand had a strong interest in the destinations and aftercare of young people arriving in the country under the various schemes. When the first party of 36 boys assisted by the Salvation Army arrived in Auckland in December 1924, there was a waiting list of 80 farmers to receive them.⁵⁴ Similarly, the Womens' Division of the New Zealand Farmers Union were enthusiastic about overseeing all English Public School boys and in 1926 wrote to the New Zealand Sheepowners' Federation, encouraging members wives to do the same for Flock House boys.⁵⁵ Among its initial objectives, the Women's division of the New Zealand Farmers Union pledged to watch all legislative measures affecting country women, to oversee the upbringing of all "junior migrants", and to work to gain more domestic help on farms.⁵⁶ The enthusiasm demonstrated not only the friendliness of New Zealand citizens to British visitors but also their high expectations of imported British labour.

⁵² A. H. McIntock, (ed) An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Vol. 2, (Wellington, R. E. Owen, 1966), p.133; Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, A. J. H. R., D-9, p.2

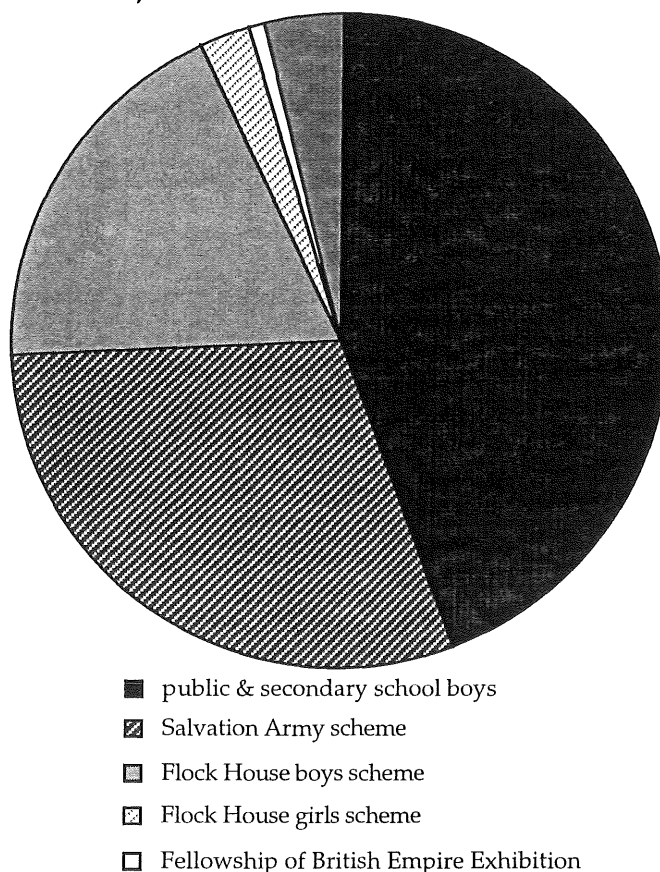
⁵³ See pp.137-140.

⁵⁴ The War Cry, December 13, 1924, p.3.

⁵⁵ Women's Division. New Zealand Farmers Union Minute book. 4 August 1926.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 28 January 1927.

Figure 7: The composition of official child migration schemes, for the five years ended March 31, 1927.



Source: A.J.H.R., D-9, 1927.

The child migration schemes of the twenties.

The first post-war schemes placed British Public and secondary school boys directly with farmers for agricultural training. In 1920, the Immigration Department asked local Farmers' Unions if they would be open to a proposal bringing in boys aged seventeen to twenty as farm labourers⁵⁷. There was delay in response, although we cannot be certain for what reason because of an absence of records, and in 1924 the department eventually agreed to the conditions on which it would place these immigrants with farmers. The public and secondary-school "boys" were to be between the age of sixteen and nineteen and would work for the wage of 10s. per week with board and

⁵⁷ S. Constantine "Immigration and the Making of New Zealand, 1918-1939," in S. Constantine, (ed), Emigrants and Empire. British Settlement in the Dominions between the wars, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990), p.133

lodging on Taranaki farms.⁵⁸ The "boys" could just as easily have been defined as young men. Later they were sent to other provinces.

The next logical step, the introduction of farm training and schooling for boy immigrants, was attempted in 1925. Younger boys were sent to New Zealand secondary schools for preliminary training and "socialisation" amongst their New Zealand peers before being apprenticed to local farmers.⁵⁹ The scheme was initially tried at New Plymouth Boys High School and then at other North Island schools. From 1929 Waitaki Boys High school was the first South Island school to take part in the trial. Boys who had this opportunity to mix with colonial youths were more successful in their adjustment than those who had been immediately seconded to farms.⁶⁰

Officially an interest was taken in the farm boys' general welfare, in the hope that they might prove good farmers and eventually own land in their own right. The Immigration Department required that its boys make monthly reports and many of these were reproduced in the departments annual reports. These reports were in general optimistic; the tone and nature of the letters were of young farmers already settled in their New Zealand lifestyle. Whether this satisfaction was shared by the inductees is debatable. "Cantab" a Cambridge educated labourer, vented his frustrations with the Immigration department in several articles written for the *Christchurch Press*;

Though we had been asked to write to the Immigration Department occasionally informing it how we were progressing - some of these letters, I believe, being sent to England - and though we were guaranteed a job for six months on arrival, as far as I could see the Government's interest went no further.⁶¹

Eighteen year old Jack Locke, a public school boy who came over on this scheme in 1926, does not recall any actual governmental involvement in his placement.⁶² He did, however, keep in contact with a government

⁵⁸"Boy Immigrants" *A. J. H. R.*, 1924, D-8.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰Borrie, p.164.

⁶¹*The Press*, 14 September 1929, p.15

⁶²Interview with Jack Locke by J. Malcolm, 20 June 1995. Authors own collection.

department, presumably that of Immigration. The Department asked Jack about his employers, but he received no official reply to the criticisms he made. After troubles on his first Taranaki farm, Jack transferred through someone he knew, to another dairy farm at Taupiri in the Waikato which was a much happier arrangement.⁶³

Reflection on this post-war experiment would not be long in coming. By 1927 five former public school boys had purchased farms, and the actions of others had induced family members to follow them to the Dominion. However, it was too early to judge the success of the scheme, as these young men did not easily settle into New Zealand colonial life. Many had come straight from school in Britain and were unused to the work and the conditions.⁶⁴ Those who stayed on during the Depression came to realise that the lack of sympathy shown by "colonials" was viewed by them as a kind of "colonial independence".⁶⁵ Many, however, did not stay. Of those sent to Waitaki Boys' High School, at least fifty percent returned to England. In the words of H. D. Thomson, the Under-Secretary for Immigration, "while having a good general knowledge, they are in most cases totally ignorant of many things with which New Zealand boys are familiar".⁶⁶ Characteristically an inability to find a niche within New Zealand society was viewed by New Zealand officials and by the New Zealand public as a failure in the selection process. The "right type" of boys had no problems adjusting. The very importance of a work-related suitability would indicate some kind of unannounced agenda. It was by no means insignificant that the individuals involved would soon be able to do the work of grown men and women, as most if not all were at the stage at which they might otherwise be starting apprenticeships and entering the workforce.⁶⁷

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Borrie, p.164

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Annual Report on the Department of Immigration, A. J. H. R., D-9, 1925, p.4.

⁶⁷Some other schemes took boys as young as fourteen.

Very little allowance was made for cultural differences in placement, and at times New Zealand officials' disregard for the British class system within a New Zealand context can quite readily be seen. Elsie Locke remembered two public school boys who had been placed at Waiuku and the contrast they provided to local boys;

We were all overwhelmed, including me, the little sister still at school, with their beautiful manners, and I often think about them, you know, gently brought up boys. I don't know what farms they worked or what they were really like. But it was a pretty big shock to public schoolboys, just being thrown in to just any old farm.⁶⁸

When the New Zealand government set up the Department of Immigration in 1920, it also invited the Salvation Army to assist and to set up its own Immigration Department to meet and provide for new adult and boy arrivals. In these first two years of this service, the 'Army met and provided accommodation for 3,901 immigrants and found employment for 982.⁶⁹ It has been estimated that the Army was caring for 500 immigrant children by 1922, with an estimated 700 young men aged between fourteen and nineteen having undergone the Putaruru farm training scheme between 1923 and 1930.⁷⁰

Under this scheme, all those who came out to work on New Zealand farms from 1924 had to undergo farm training at the Salvation Army's Putaruru farm near Rotorua or undergo three months preliminary training at the Hadleigh farm school before leaving Great Britain.⁷¹ All the boys were between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. While a large number attended the farm school at Putaruru, many English, Scottish and Irish boys had attended the school at Hadleigh in Britain and were placed directly in farming positions throughout the dominion.

The Putaruru farm was the site of two Salvation Army institutions; the Hodderville home where younger school age boys were housed, and the

⁶⁸Interview with Jack Locke, 20 June 1995. Aside by Elsie Locke.

⁶⁹J. C. Waite, *Dear Mr Booth*, (Wellington, The Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters, 1964), p.73

⁷⁰*Ibid*, pp.69, 74.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p.74.

Williams' home which provided accommodation for the older boys.⁷² It was intended as an orphanage for school boys, and also as an institution for older boys sponsored by the Army to emigrate.⁷³ Younger recruits attended the Putarere school during the day and were supervised at Hodderville by a team of Salvation Army officers, and this supervision continued at the Williams' Home for older boys. On occasion they received government-funded lectures on various aspects of farm life.⁷⁴

The Salvation Army was also preoccupied with the issue of "types". On their arrival the candidates were variously described as "virile, youthful immigrants", "alert vigorous youths", and "healthy, active, virile and enthusiastic young sons of New Zealand."⁷⁵ The Salvation Army undertook to assume responsibility for its "boy" imports for three years, which appears to have allowed the young men enough time to become accustomed to colonial life, as, according to W. D. Borrie, they had a low failure rate.⁷⁶ No other evidence has been found to support this, but it can be readily argued that the farm facility provided a consistent environment for boys with the fellowship of peers, many of whom had made the journey together, and therefore gave the boys a better environment in which to adjust to their new situation than the total immersion provided by some other schemes.

The largest privately funded juvenile migration scheme in New Zealand was run by the New Zealand Sheepowners' Acknowledgement of Debt to British Seamen Fund, a body whose industry was dependent on the availability of rural-based labour. It became commonly known as the Flock House scheme. During the first World War all New Zealand wool was sold to the Imperial

⁷²*The War Cry*, 29 November 1930, p.3, 10.

⁷³J. T. Tihema, *A History of the Hodderville Boys' Home*, (Christchurch, Page Plus Ltd., 1991), pp.2, 6-8, 85, 90. Many boys came from "The Nest", a children's home in Hamilton, and after the end of the boy's migration scheme, the farm continued as an orphanage and farm training school until the agricultural school closed in 1963, and the boy's home in 1986.

⁷⁴*The War Cry*, December 13, 1924, p.11

⁷⁵*The War Cry*, November 7, 1925, p.11; *The War Cry*, December 13, 1924, p.3; *The War Cry*, November 29, 1930, p.3.

⁷⁶Borrie, p.165.

government at a fixed price, but towards the end of the conflict wool that was surplus to imperial requirements was sold at a profit. The New Zealand government decided that woolgrowers should receive a fixed average price for their wool and that all profits from the sale of wool for civilian purposes should be shared equally between the growers and the Imperial government until one year after the end of hostilities. However, it was suggested by Edward Newman, M. P. for Rangitikei, that the growers' portion of the surplus profits should be put in a fund to help the dependants of sailors of the Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine who had been killed or wounded in the war.⁷⁷ After some discussion the idea was adopted and the fund, totalling £237, 000, was administered by a board of Trustees.

Initial use was in the form of grants and food parcels to dependants in London and within New Zealand. It was not until 1923 that the Trustees decided to apportion a large amount of funds to bringing out the sons of seamen killed or wounded, training them for farm work and placing them with farmers.⁷⁸ To this end, a large homestead, Flock House, its 1,000 acre estate and an adjoining 6,000 acres were purchased at Bulls. An additional 2,000 acres of sand dune coastal land was leased.

The Flock House scheme was available to boys aged fourteen to seventeen who, once selected, would undergo a preliminary training period for six months on a farm in New Zealand, where they were trained in all aspects of the industry from land development to the running of an established farm.⁷⁹ The first boys arrived in June 1924, and continued at a rate of approximately one hundred per year. Boys were housed, fed and paid an individually negotiated indenture wage at the expense of the Fund. This was legally provided under the Apprentice's Agreement, which was based on the conditions of the Masters'

⁷⁷V. C. Goodall, "Flockhouse": A History of The New Zealand Sheepowners' Acknowledgement of Debt to British Seamen Fund, (Palmerston North, Keeling and Mundy Ltd., 1962), p.7.

⁷⁸Ibid., p.12.

⁷⁹Ibid.

and Apprentices Act.⁸⁰ This meant that while one third of the boy's wages was paid to the individual, the remaining two-thirds were invested by the trustees on the boy's behalf. In order to be given a place, candidates had to meet certain prerequisites which were eerily similar to those of other schemes;

Boys must be of good moral character, and of good health and physique, of a standard sufficiently high to comply with the regulations governing immigration into New Zealand and they are expected to show a reasonable aptitude for work on the land and must be prepared to undergo medical examinations.⁸¹

In 1927 a Flock House scheme was also created for girls which trained them to work as domestic servants. Property was purchased at Awapuni, Palmerston North, where girls were taught laundry, cooking, baking, sewing, nursing, poultry, bee-keeping, butter-making and "orchard culture".⁸² When the girls scheme was abandoned in 1930 because of a decline in British girls immigrating, the national chapter of Women's Division of the Farmers Union (W. D. F. U.) petitioned the Minister of Education to encourage the government to buy the House and continue the training of New Zealand and British girls as "mother's helps."⁸³ The establishment was handed over to the W. D. F. U, but was destroyed by fire not long afterwards.⁸⁴

The scheme for boys continued for another year. According to one source, 635 boys and 128 girls were eventually brought out.⁸⁵ After the demise of the integrative function for migrants, the New Zealand Government took over the venture and some 8,000 acres of adjoining land in 1937 to train New Zealand boys only, for farm work. The initial scheme had a "success rate" of 80 percent, and by the mid 1930s, 33 percent had bought their own farms.⁸⁶ In the late

⁸⁰Master and Apprentice Amendment Act 1920, 11 Geo. V, no.35.

⁸¹Report by Lord Bledisloe to Overseas Settlement Board, 20 April 1937 in A. J. C. P.5416: 694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

⁸²Goodall, p.13.

⁸³Women's Division New Zealand Farmers Union, Minutes, 16 January 1931.

⁸⁴Recollections of Doreen Bailey, "The Mitchell's Story" in R. Slatter (ed) Memories of Flock House 1939, (Greenhithe, R. Slatter, 1989).

⁸⁵T. Gambrill, Reminiscences of 1948, (Waikanae, The Heritage Press, 1987), p.10.

⁸⁶Meeting between Lord Bledisloe and the Overseas Settlement Board, 20 April 1937 in A.J.C.P 5406:666, M2/10 Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners.

1930s the scheme was still in operation training local boys for a period of twelve months, before placement.

The Church of England, and the Fellowship of British Empire Exhibition Scholarship, both ran special land schemes, although very little is known about them. The Fellowship of British Empire Exhibition Scholarship began in 1926 and was relatively short-lived as in 1927 the government decided to restrict assisted passages to Flock House, Salvation Army and Church of England boys. The scheme was conducted by the Department of Agriculture, which operated its farm school at Ruakura State Farm. The farm had previously been used for the training of returned disabled soldiers, but in 1922 it was decided that it should be used as a farm school.⁸⁷ The Church of England scheme, which was also begun in 1926, operated differently in that it brought out young men under the nominated system for apprenticeship to farmers and to industrial employers. The success of this scheme is difficult to assess because the subjects were not assembled at any training centre, but rather were quickly dispersed throughout the country.

What may be discerned from these rural and domestic schemes is that they were considered to be successful, because labour was being directed into farming irrespective of the differing degrees of success with which young people on the different schemes took to their new environment. The candidates were selected on the basis of a somewhat vague "type" which related to physical strength and a willingness to learn. Having indicated a selection process was in order, the impetus was on the individuals to fulfil the potential expected of them. Each year during their operation the Department of Immigration proudly gave statistics of the successes and anecdotal reports of progress. The rural sector gained a special status in dispersion of young immigrants. Other sectors of industry were not considered for the placement

⁸⁷Report of the Board of Agriculture, A. J. H. R. H-29A, 1922, p.2.

of young people. Yet from 1921 there was a keen demand for immigrants in other sectors, particularly factories and secondary industries.⁸⁸

On a general level, the transplantation of young people from Britain to New Zealand was a triumph of empire. The movement of large numbers of valuable workers with links to the empire had been successfully carried out with minimum cost. It must be remembered that in terms of labour the migration of children and young could be regarded as guaranteed workers for a set, if not indefinite, period of time. The young arrived without family and often were naive as to what to expect. Having made the long passage they were financially bound to their work and as such were 'stranded' in New Zealand; a realisation that was readily understood by at least one child who was sent to another part of the Empire.

To me it was such a feeling of loss. I thought, I'm never going to see England again. Because we'd been on the ship for so long, we knew it would take a long time to get back. And who was going to send us back? What chance did we have of going back? None.⁸⁹

W. D. Borrie argues that the reason the migrants of the Flock House, Salvation Army and Church of England schemes more readily took to their new environment than public and secondary school boys was the class identification of lower class boys with their working class New Zealand employers.⁹⁰ A period of adjustment was necessary whether this be in New Zealand schools or farm schools with companionship from their peers. Fundamental to this was the degree of acceptance which the "new chums" received within the isolated rural communities; to some extent any problems the Flock House proteges may have had with lack of association could have been mitigated by the Womens' Division of the New Zealand Farmers' Union attempts to organise reunions or holidays for Flock House boys and girls with

⁸⁸Borrie, p.160.

⁸⁹P. Bean, and J. Melville, Lost Children of the Empire, (London, Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1989), p.121.

⁹⁰ Borrie, p.165.

members.⁹¹ Fundamentally these boys simply had no alternative to farming employment in New Zealand. It was a chance of "self-improvement" which simply did not exist in Britain for those who came from the lower classes.

While primary schools were well known dissemination centres for the teaching of patriotism, and pupils were indoctrinated with the trappings of British imperialism, this did not detract from the basic understanding that children from "Home" were different.⁹² British children who emigrated as part of family groups noticed discernible cultural differences between themselves and their New Zealand peers who could respond cruelly to obvious differences;

I always used to think that I must have been the best reader in the class because every time the inspector came - I know different now - the teacher would say you know, Jessie Taylor would you get up and read, and I would get up and read and I realised as I got older they just wanted to hear me talk. And um, the children used to follow me home and say, um, they gave me the works, they were really rude. "A did ya joost cum owt frum 'ome on a beeg boort, ay". And they would tease me all the way home, and of course my cousin had to stand the brunt of it too, but I actually was in a higher class than him in England, but when I came to New Zealand they put me down two standards. Why I don't know. ..⁹³

Scots born Chas Reid's accent drew similar ridicule, but in general after some adjustment the children were accepted amongst their peers.⁹⁴ Apart from the cultural aspect of accents, most children arriving were of "British origin" and therefore had no language barrier or racial distinctions by which they could be permanently differentiated.

Fundamentally, the migration of children to New Zealand within the twenties was taken at face value. It focussed on positive factors, like the benefits of a good climate, healthy living and better opportunities for children, and the boon of young, flexible and cheap labour for the primary sector. The phenomenon was marked by a failure to consider exploitation, be it by

⁹¹Women's Division New Zealand Farmers Union. Annual Dominions Conference Report 1931, p.5.

⁹²R. Openshaw, "Patriotism and the New Zealand Primary School: the decisive years of the twenties", D. Phil. (History) Hamilton, University of Waikato, 1978.

⁹³Interview with J.Martyn, by J. Malcolm, 23 June 1995. Copy in authors collection.

⁹⁴C. Reid to J. Malcolm, 8 June 1995. Copy in author's collection.

physical, mental or sexual abuse, as a potential outcome. As the schemes themselves began to notice decreased funding and dwindling numbers from 1927, the value of children was disparately increasing.

The development of child welfare

The fundamental weakness of the child migration schemes was a failure to recognise and accommodate the growing recognition of the importance of children and childhood. This development is embodied in the changes in child welfare, because as practises became identified and standardised, they also became constraints on the labour and treatment of children. The trend itself was not an isolated one; remarkably similar social, economic and political forces were at work in other advanced industrial societies so as to make similar policy innovations.⁹⁵ The post World War One period saw a quickening of interest in infant and child health and welfare with a huge increase in publicity work undertaken in the public and private sectors.⁹⁶ This growing "cult of the child" spread across the Atlantic, where Josephine Baker, an American doctor, wrote of the common conditions of war:

It may seem like a cold-blooded thing to say, but someone ought to point out that the World War (One) was a backhanded break for children- a break originating in the world's dismay at the appalling waste of human life, both at the front and behind the lines. As more and more thousands of men were slaughtered every day, the belligerent nations, on whatever side, began to see that new human lives, which could grow up to replace brutally extinguished adult lives, were extremely valuable national assets.⁹⁷

Arguably the immediate post-war New Zealand governments were increasingly involved in measures to protect the welfare and status of children as children rather than as small adults or viable economic units. Legislation covering the employment of children had been passed in the nineteenth century under the reforming zeal of the Liberals, which established through education and industrial reforms that childhood extended until the age of

⁹⁵J. Macnicol, "Welfare, Wages and the Family. Child endowment in comparative perspective, 1900-1959," in R. Cooter (ed) In the Name of the Child. Health and Welfare, 1880 - 1949, (London, Routledge, 1992), p.244.

⁹⁶D. Dwork, War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children. A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918, (London, Tavistock Publications, 1987).

⁹⁷S. J. Baker, Fighting For Life, (London, Robert Hale Ltd., 1940), p.185.

fourteen years.⁹⁸ Fundamentally, however, politicians were reluctant to interfere in the workplace and to a certain extent this definition included a reluctance to intervene in the abuse of child labour, particularly in rural areas.⁹⁹ As has been discussed in chapter one, in the late twenties the influence of rural interest groups in the legislature declined, as the effects of economic crisis began to dictate the restriction and later the termination of all assisted migration schemes.

In 1925, the government introduced a Child Welfare Act which regulated the terms of guardianship and the conditions of institutionalisation of children under sixteen years, and in 1927 began to make annual reports on the state of child welfare.¹⁰⁰ However, it is likely that the 1926 Family Allowances Act had the greatest impact on the way in which the legislature defined childhood. Hailed as preempting the first true state family allowance system in the world, the Act was prompted by the 1926 election campaign in which the government wished to forestall the Labour opposition by promising to introduce a Bill.¹⁰¹ The Bill was financed out of general taxation and paid 2s. 0d. per week to third and consequent children where family income did not exceed £4 per week.¹⁰² It had very strict criteria; payments were to be used exclusively on the maintenance of dependent children, were not available to be made to Asians, whether they were British subjects or not, and could be withheld if applicants were deemed to be of bad character or their children illegitimate. The Act marked a conscious move by the government to protect those young New Zealanders who it held to be desirable future citizens, and may in fact have minimised the numbers of children who were prematurely withdrawn from school during the depression.¹⁰³ In effect the Act attempted to avoid the use of

⁹⁸J. Graham, "Child Employment in New Zealand," *N. Z. J. H.*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1987, p.75.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p.63.

¹⁰⁰*Child Welfare Act 1925*, no.22, 16 Geo. V.

¹⁰¹Macnicol, pp.260-261.

¹⁰²*Family Allowances Act 1926*, no.30, 17 Geo. V.

¹⁰³K. Rankin, "Labour Supply in New Zealand and Australia 1919-1939", M.A. Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1990, p.108.

children as minor money-earners within the family by recognising their status as dependents.

From the very start of postwar migration, efforts were made to regulate the conditions of juvenile labour. In 1920, the Master and Apprentice Amendment Act gave the High Commissioner in London the ability to execute the indenture of British boys into New Zealand apprenticeships.¹⁰⁴ Formal conditions were created whereby the boy's age and approval were taken into account as were the conditions for repayment of passage money. In 1923 the New Zealand government invited a delegation from the Overseas Settlement Committee to 'make certain enquiries into conditions affecting the general welfare and prospects of persons from the United Kingdom who settle in the Dominion under the provisions of the Empire Settlement Act of 1922'.¹⁰⁵ This delegation delved carefully into the reception and treatment of young people by private organisations. By 1924, the New Zealand government instituted orders regulating the conditions by which farm boys arrived and worked in New Zealand.¹⁰⁶ By the same token these actions did not stand alone. In Australia, farm boys were also kept under the closest scrutiny of all the migrants, working under terms similar to indentured apprenticeship which had been authorised by statute.¹⁰⁷ The government followed carefully the movements of other dominions under the Empire Settlement Act 1922 in assisting British boys to eventually purchase their own land.¹⁰⁸

The early thirties were also marked by concern for health and the birth-rates of children. Throughout advanced industrial societies, policies focused on raising birth-rates, especially in Germany and Italy where pronatalism was

¹⁰⁴Master and Apprentice Amendment Act 1920, no.35, 11 Geo. V.

¹⁰⁵ British Overseas Settlement Delegation, p.5.

¹⁰⁶'Boy Immigrants,' A. J. H. R., D-8, 1924. The value of these provision can only be assessed by studying the "success" of the boys involved. See comments on page ##

¹⁰⁷Roe, p.221. The South Australian and New South Wales schemes were enacted by statute in 1922 and 1924-5 respectively, while in Queensland there was a similar non legislative format. Tasmania's system was informal but in the same spirit.

¹⁰⁸ N. Z. P. D., Vol. 213, August 3, 1927, p.186.

strongly imbued with fascist ideology.¹⁰⁹ Health camps for children were initiated, and the preservation of infant life was highlighted for health professionals by Lord Bledisloe, in 1934.¹¹⁰ In 1930 Cora Wilding formed the Sunlight League which became synonymous with the eugenic ideal of increasing the average standard of the population by encouraging reproduction by those who were considered to be the fitter members of society.¹¹¹ The health and future of the nation was clearly on the minds of some, and for good reason it seemed.

The fall in the New Zealand white birth rate threatened to decrease and restrict the pool of low-cost young labour available to farmers. Yet by this stage the assisted immigration programme was over.¹¹² The end of the Empire Settlement Act, and the reprioritisation of the new Labour government meant that the interests of the rural community were no longer so crucial. Importantly the desire by the farming community to have and assist British boys for farm work did not abate, but was constrained by the necessity for indenture contracts which the farming community viewed as undesirable, and the probability of interference from the Arbitration Court, as noted by the 1929 New Zealand Farmers Union Conference.¹¹³ By 1936 a provision of the Agricultural Workers Act required that no children under the age of fifteen be employed "for hire or reward" on a dairy farm, limiting the field to sheep farming as a potential focal point for schoolboy migration.¹¹⁴ More significantly minimum wages were set, with farmers being required to pay workers under the age of seventeen 10s. 6d. a week, those under eighteen £1 2s.

¹⁰⁹Macnicol, p.262.

¹¹⁰ C. B. Bledisloe, Ideals of Nationhood. A Selection of Addresses delivered in New Zealand, (New Plymouth, Avery and Sons Ltd., 1935), pp.267-275.

¹¹¹ S. K. Wilson, "The Aims and Ideology of Cora Wilding and the Sunlight League 1930-36", M. A. Essay (History). University of Canterbury, 1980, p.7.

¹¹² Constantine, "Immigration".. p.19.

¹¹³The Press, 25 July , 1929, p.3.

¹¹⁴Agricultural Workers Act 1936, 1 Edw. VIII., no. 30. s.13. This policy seems to have been deliberate, for on the occasion noted in the footnote above, Mr Nash stated: "...provided markets are available there should be openings for boys of this class in sheep-farming and to a lesser extent in dairy farming, which was a rather more exacting form of work."

6d., and those under nineteen £1 7s. 6d. Supporters of the renewal of "boy" migration realised that the avoidance of applications for minimum wages had been crucial.¹¹⁵ Farm "boys" could no longer be considered cheap. The move was a major blow to one of the rural sector's major fields of employment, because traditionally labour on these farms had come from within the family unit or from a pool of primarily young, itinerant labour. In 1938 the incumbent Labour government was unwilling to appease the strident calls of the rural sector because of its unwillingness to commit public funds to assisting migration on any large scale, and some politicians began to suggest that New Zealand-born girls and boys fill the perpetual need for farm labour. In a deputation to the Prime Minister, a representative of the W. D. F. U. replied;

The plain fact is that our boys and girls do not want to go on to the farms or work in the homes. Those two classes of work are very unpopular. Neither do the men want to learn farm work; they would rather join the Waterside Workers' Union - I was told that there were 5,000 applicants for admission onto (sic) the Union when there were only 100 vacancies. The men prefer to work for 16/- a day near town; it is much more pleasant to them than working the necessarily long hours on the farms. Mr Semple himself has told a deputation that the pioneers had gone out to look for work but the modern men would not walk into the tents set up for them.¹¹⁶

Attempts to persuade the government to resume the general assisted immigration programme became clearly perceptible in a spate of representations to the Prime Minister from 1936, including newspaper and journal articles and personal submissions.¹¹⁷ Pressure groups like the Five Million Club had in place definite plans to bring out "some twenty young girls and ten youths" from Denmark.¹¹⁸ However, the Five Million Club were constrained by a lack of adequate finances, and negotiations with Denmark fell through.¹¹⁹ In May 1937 the New Zealand Farmers Union issued a formal

¹¹⁵Armstrong to J. C. Rolleston, London, 15 June 1937. L 1, 22/1/3. Suggestions about state-aided migration, 1936-46., part 1, National Archives, Wellington.

¹¹⁶Mrs Barrer, in notes of a deputation to the Prime Minister, 21 February 1938 in L1, 22/1/4, Introduction of Nominations Scheme, National Archives.

¹¹⁷L1, 22/1/3, Suggestions re state-aided migration, 1936-46, Bundle 224, parts 1-2. National Archives, Wellington.

¹¹⁸Castle to Lord Elton, 1 October 1937, in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/1-54 New Zealand migration policy general.

¹¹⁹Price, Dominions Office to R. Dunbar, 31 March 1939 in in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M326/18 New

resolution to the then acting Prime Minister urging "serious consideration" of a system of training young boys and girls for farm work, as it was felt that "immigration of this nature would cause no embarrassment to the people already in the country"¹²⁰ In October 1937 Lord Bledisloe carried the following message from the Flock House Trustees to the Empire Migration and Development Conference in London;

We urge the absolute necessity of training and aftercare of young migrants in the country of their adoption and later a subsidy on savings, as so successfully inaugurated and carried out at Flock House. The beneficial results of our operations from 1924 to 1932 are increasingly manifest. Many are independently established in farms and in businesses, and many are holding good administrative farm positions. The great majority have proved to be sound colonists and have become absorbed into the working life of the community. We have urged the Government here to allow us to resume the immigration of seamen's sons and daughters on the original lines, for whom we will be responsible. We will most cordially co-operate with any sound scheme recommended by you and approved by the Conference.¹²¹

The rhetoric employed by the ministers of the Labour government always illustrated a reluctance which was moderated by courtesy. For example the view offered was that while the government was not adverse to the renewal of schoolboy migration, markets must be available to support the higher population.¹²² Prime Minister Savage acknowledged in 1937 the desire of New Zealanders to increase population and the possibility of restarting the Flock House scheme for British boys if the need was not met by New Zealand youth.¹²³ According to a report from a representative of the British National Council of the Y. M. C. A., the Government was prepared to allow the Y. M. C. A. to fill vacancies at the training centre, if sufficient local boys could not be found.¹²⁴ However Savage was non-committal on the subject of restarting

Zealand migration policy general.

¹²⁰ Letter dated 25 May, 1937, in *ibid.*

¹²¹ A cablegram read out by Lord Bledisloe at the conference, in A.J.C. P.5425:715, M567/2 Unofficial migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference, 1937; Empire Development Council.

¹²² Meeting between the O. S. B. and Mr Nash, 1 December 1936, in A.J.C.P.5418:700, M458/1-73. Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women: U. K. grants for incidental expenses of migrants.

¹²³ Discussion between the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and M. J. Savage, 22 June 1937 in A.J.C.P. 5416:694, M326/18 New Zealand migration policy general.

¹²⁴ Major Bavin's Report to the Overseas Settlement Board, 18 July 1938, in A.J.C.P.5420:704,

official immigration, because it was not in line with government policy.¹²⁵ Ministers spoken to by Major Bavin of Britain's Y. M. C. A. were vague, stating that the Government would be prepared to reopen the assisted passage scheme for boys from Britain if it decided to establish another farm training scheme. Government legislation did however disable this option to a certain extent.

In retrospect the promotion of the immigration of children and juveniles to New Zealand in the 1920s appears to have been a temporary placebo for those British citizens who were concerned both about the population of New Zealand and its productivity. Children, while popularly seen as the future of the Empire became a desirable export item for British Imperialism, and a commodity for New Zealand development. "British" citizenship and their tender years made them eminently suitable. In reality suitability indicated more about an individual's assumed potential to assimilate into the population with an adequate support system, than a preordained disposition towards rural colonial living. In the Dominion of New Zealand, there was a need to address the problem of population and urban drift while philanthropic societies and the powerful rural sector waited to receive what Britain offered. At the interface the migration of these young predominantly male "Britons" was viewed as a "success" by the executors of the schemes. In retrospect, I have questioned the wisdom of the transplantation of numbers of urban school boys, many of them with middle class origins, to a new country to do rural labour with little or no training and often across class boundaries. Contemporary critics were preoccupied with the interests of employers rather than the young men involved. As always financial issues were in the foreground and the Empire Settlement Act of 1922 may have appeared to have been an answer to governmental prayers. Perhaps it was a eugenically-based concern about the

M486/1-27, Young Men's Christian Association migration work: general; activities of Major Bavin.

¹²⁵Meeting between the Overseas Settlement Board and Mr Savage, 17 June 1937 in A.J.CP.5406: 666, M2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners.

future, or a natural response to post war recovery but for whatever reason, the 1930s opened with redefined values on the treatment of children and young adults. The demand for youthful migrant labour in rural areas reached various crescendos, particularly in the post-depression recovery, but what is significant is that legislative and social changes exemplified and protected the rights of children. Childhood was recognised as a state of learning and development and as such their experiences and labour were more valuable than before. In their weakened position, the farming community was in no position to bargain; at any rate the reputation of youthful migrants as cheap and malleable seemed somewhat irrelevant. Fundamentally by the late thirties the call for child migration was itself irrelevant as the day of assisted child immigration schemes had passed.

Chapter five: "Girls of Good Standing". Female migration to New Zealand between the wars.

One of the issues of concern in so-called settler societies in the nineteenth century revolved around the sexual imbalance of the population of these societies, particularly in rural areas. Further to this, there is a considerable history in government and private immigration societies giving particular assistance and encouragement to single women and families. Despite the perceived significance of female migration in the interwar period, the subject has not been widely discussed in literature until recently. Of these, discussions of the New Zealand and Australian context is minimal.¹ Suzann Buckley in her study of the migration of British women to Canada suggests that the interest raised in assisting female migration was primarily focused on the production of future generations of Canadians who would be loyal to the Empire, and secondly on relieving the distress of Britain's 'surplus' women while at the same time supplying Canada with the domestic servants that it so badly wanted.² Buckley argues that in fact these agendas were not as complimentary as they might initially seem. In relation to the New Zealand example, this chapter aims to look at the two concepts of women at the time - that is, conceptions of women as progenitors of the Imperial race, and as exploitable and cheap labour.

The history of New Zealand's female immigration in the interwar period followed a parallel path. A great many women came to New Zealand from Britain in the interwar period, many of them travelling alone. Primarily however, most arrived in chain migration, that is, when a route was established along which migrants travelled over a period of many years from one

¹ For discussion of the literature, see J. Gothard "'The healthy, wholesome British domestic girls': single female migration and the Empire Settlement Act, 1922-1930," in Constantine (ed) Emigrants and Empire, pp.72-73.

² S. Buckley, "British Female Emigration and Imperial Development: experiments in Canada, 1885 - 1931," Hecate, Vol. 3, Part 2, July 1977, pp.26-40.

community to a modified community in the new country. As has been discussed earlier Britain was the only country with which New Zealand had a policy of assisted migration, and therefore the great majority of women who came to New Zealand came from British territories; the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia and Canada. The bonds between Britain and the empire were "culture and blood,"³ and from this perspective, the study of female migration is a case study of the British government's attempt to promote imperial unity in the 1920s and 30s. From the colonial angle, the immigration schemes of the 1920s were motivated by an intention to acquire workers with particular skills to employers. Unlike the other colonies, however, New Zealand and the Australian states required artificial inducements to stimulate immigration.

The desire for women settlers in New Zealand was often expressed in terms of a "shortage" of domestic servants, that is, women defined as general servants, cooks, housemaids, parlourmaids, waitresses, laundresses, or nursemaids. The shortage also related to workers available at the "right" wage, that is, a low wage. Underlying this need was a fear that if these occupational gaps were left too long unfilled then the places would be taken by "coloured" labour; an undesirable situation.⁴ The best means of strengthening the imperial connection in the colonies was to encourage British females to emigrate to the colonies as domestics, because it filled a labour niche as well as providing more "white" women for the purposes of correcting the sexual balance. Traditionally, however, female emigration had been largely the preserve of private charitable organisations. In the nineteenth century a number of private women's migration societies benefited from the efforts of charismatic figures.⁵ It was felt that domestic service in particular had been

³ Keith Williams in D. Kennedy, "Empire Migration in Post-War Reconstruction: The Role of the Oversea Settlement Committee, 1919-1922" *Albion*, Vol.20, p.403.

⁴ *United Empire*, Vol.X, no.7, July 1919 p.325.

⁵ See U. Monk, *New Horizons. A hundred years of women's migration*, (London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1963).

affected by the wartime shift of women into the occupations.⁶ Keith Rankin's study of New Zealand census figures in the period shows that many more females aged 16 to 24 had marginal incomes sufficient to support a basic standard of living in 1935 than in 1925.⁷ Most of this increase would represent women moving from full time to part time employment, but with increasing time this also represented new workers joining the full time workforce. Some kind of positive response needed to be adopted to fulfil the colonial need for service while at the same time giving the women valuable future training for the socialised occupation of wife and mother. New Zealand in 1919 had a population just over one million with a 'surplus' of 13,500 males - a point that was not overlooked by delegates from the British Overseas Settlement Committee.⁸ The modern woman was not needed in the new world - New Zealand had enough of them already.

The type of woman wanted was one who would be involved in all aspects of household work, including cooking and laundry duties, as most New Zealand homes had only one servant. It was not insignificant however that these were the skills involved in home-making. Similar expectations existed for all women seeking work in private homes, even those seeking work as children's nurses or private governesses.⁹ It was perhaps for these reasons that in 1915 the New Zealand government considered offering free passage to single or widowed Belgian women under the age of 45 without children.¹⁰ The scheme did not go ahead owing to a reluctance on the part of the Belgian government to lose anymore productive members of its population. But the intention to entice women to the Antipodes for the purpose of domestic service

⁶ Report to the President of the Oversea Settlement Committee of the delegates appointed to inquire as to openings in New Zealand for women from the United Kingdom. September 1920, British Sessional Papers. House of Commons, Vol. XXII, Cmd. 933, (hereafter as Report .. of the delegates), p.4.

⁷ K. Rankin, pp.108-112.

⁸ Report .. of the delegates, p.4.

⁹ Ibid. pp.7-11.

¹⁰ LE 1, 1916/200, Widows and Orphans of British Soldiers and of Belgian Soldiers, proposal to assist to New Zealand, National Archives.

is duly noted, as is the exploitation of pro-Belgian feeling in the early war years.

Assumptions were made by public figures and accepted by the general public in New Zealand, which inferred that colonial development relied upon "British" women marrying "British" men and reproducing future generations of loyal citizens.¹¹ The Royal New Zealand Society for Health of Women and Children worked at inculcating "a responsible view of maternity and the duty of every mother to fit herself for the perfect fulfilment of the natural calls of motherhood."¹² Dr Frederic Truby King, the founder of the Plunket society and of Karitane hospitals for babies, was especially prominent in setting down protocols of child-rearing for the mothers of the interwar period; King's pamphlet, *The Expectant Mother*, was the recommended text on motherhood.¹³ Significantly, with motherhood came an imperial obligation;

The land and institutions of this country are what the Mother Country, through her pioneers, has made them. The people of this country are destined to be in physique, character, and ideals what the mothers of the country choose to make them. If the nation's mothers are behind hand, through lack of courage, energy, or personal conviction, in fulfilling the highest duties of motherhood, the nation's sons and daughters will suffer...¹⁴

British imperialist, and parliamentary under-secretary for the colonies, Leopold Amery emphasised the prospective role of post war migration;

The growth of the population in the dominions . . . is so obviously desirable that it is assumed throughout this memorandum that emigration should, so far as possible, be *directed* to countries within the confines of the British Empire. On the other hand . . . it

¹¹ United Empire, Vol. 6, no.1, January 1920, p.12; comments made by acting Prime Minister in notes of a deputation to the Prime Minister, 21 February 1938, pp.37-38 in National Archives, L1, 22/1/4.

¹² MS 831, Reel 8. Aims of the Royal New Zealand Society for Health of Women and Children, H. E. Holland Papers.

¹³ P. Mein Smith, Maternity in Dispute. New Zealand 1920-1939, ((Wellington, Department of Internal Affairs, 1986), pp.2, 10.

¹⁴ Bledisloe, Ideals of Nationhood, p.42. The Women's Division of the New Zealand Farmers Union similarly sought "girls with the tradition of the Empire behind them" in the characteristics of prospective migrants. See Women's Division. New Zealand Farmers Union, Minute Book, 29 July 1927.

is essential that UK manpower and taxable capacity should not be weakened in the process of Imperial development.¹⁵

The promotion of single female migration was always something of a problem, but Amery concluded that emigration although not excessive in numbers, was to be sexually balanced and therefore there was a case for aiding women and children who wished to emigrate. Furthermore Amery argued that by encouraging immigration to the Empire, the state could reduce domestic unemployment and thereby increase wages, improve living standards and encourage a higher birth rate to compensate for the outflow. From the Imperial perspective the aim was to maintain and strengthen the Commonwealth by effectively distributing 'manpower', and women had a continuing role in this empire building.¹⁶ Deeply imbued with a Social Darwinist world view, the imperial government in the post World War One era saw the potential for engineering social change, in effect creating a "great age of British imperialism between the wars"; an imperialism characterised by the central role which women were to play.¹⁷ Yet the attractiveness of female migration had another facet; male imperialists believed that a "new woman" had emerged from the war, like a phoenix from the flames. World War One had caused a social and economic revolution that had done more to emancipate women than "decades of suffragism and all its violent concomitants."¹⁸ Female labour had not only extended beyond the domestic sphere - it was potentially intercontinental.

¹⁵ Great Britain, Cabinet 24/75, GT 6846, 20 February 1919, quoted in I. Drummond, Imperial Economic Policy 1917 - 1939, (Toronto, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1974), pp.60-61.

¹⁶ Plant, p.1; United Empire, Vol.8, no.4, April 1922, pp.195-99. Pamphlets disseminating Social Darwinist viewpoints often ended up on the Overseas Settlement Board's desk in London. A. J. C. P.5422: 709, M551/36-64, League of Nations and International Labour Office: migration work: labour conditions for migrant workers: demographic consequences of migration.

¹⁷ W. D. McIntyre, The Commonwealth of Nations. Origins and Impact, 1869-1971, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p.318; D. Kennedy, p.403; B. L. Blakeley, "The Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women and the Problems of empire Settlement, 1917 - 1936," Albion, Vol.20, p.422.

¹⁸ United Empire, Vol. 8, June 1917, pp.364-67.

In November 1918, a non-statutory emigration committee was established in London to keep women and ex-servicemen informed about migration opportunities, to make preliminary arrangements for the eventual regulation of passage brokers and agents, and to consider whether certain sectors of the community who intended to leave Britain should be assisted to emigrate.¹⁹ From its outset, what became known as the Overseas Settlement Committee, prioritised female migration. In its second ever recommendation, the body voted to increase female migration. The response was to include ex-servicewomen in the British Government's Free Passage Scheme for the expeditionary forces, and at the instigation of the women's services, to send delegations to Canada, Australia and New Zealand to investigate conditions and employment opportunities for women.²⁰ The committee decided to organise and subsidise the societies for encouragement of female migration, thereafter convening weekly with "almost obsessive attention to the problems of female emigration."²¹

It was agreed by the committee that more efficient work could be done if all the various women's societies could be combined to work more effectively, and so in 1919 the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women (S.O.S.B.W.) was inaugurated in Britain.²² It played a vital role in the Overseas Settlement Committee's strategy as the central conduit for female immigration. As well as being the official representative of emigration needs it provided information about conditions and passage arrangements, and provided advice and help with arrangements to women in Britain considering emigration. The Society included representatives of the British Women's Emigration Association, the South African Colonisation Society, the Colonial Intelligence League and representatives of the Women's War Services, and had an

¹⁹ Drummond, p.55.

²⁰ Report of the Overseas Settlement Committee, for the year ended 31 December 1919, British Sessional Papers. House of Commons, Vol.XXII, Cmd. 573, 1920, p.6 (284).

²¹ Drummond, p.55.

²² Plant, p.78.

impressive network of representatives, facilities and associated agencies in Britain and in the Dominions. In New Zealand, the society was assisted by the Victoria League, the Women's Institutes and various correspondents. Its constitution provided that it should assume responsibility for advising the Secretary of State on policy matters concerned with women's migration and that it should also continue existing arrangements for recruiting and selecting suitable women and providing for their passages, employment prospects and welfare in the colonies.²³ While the domestic opportunities open to women in rural areas especially were recognised by the S. O. S. B. W., it also endeavoured to arrange for the emigration of educated women to fill positions in areas such as teaching and nursing.²⁴

After some consultation, ex-servicewomen, and the widows and dependants of ex-servicemen, were given the same immigration privileges as ex-servicemen.²⁵ In April 1919 it was announced that those who wished to settle in the Empire overseas were able to obtain free third class travel at the lowest government rate to the nearest convenient port to their destination, provided that they were approved and acceptable to the government of the territory involved. While many migrants were members of the various service corps - the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps, the Women's Land Army, and the Volunteer Aid Detachments - a great number were non servicewomen forced into unemployment by the post-war reconstruction. Large numbers of the male population had left the United Kingdom to join the Expeditionary Forces abroad, and the vacant areas particularly in government departments and in factories were filled by women. However, when the many servicemen returned to their old jobs, many women were again without employment.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ G. F. Plant, A Survey of Voluntary Effort in Women's Empire Migration, (London, Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women, 1950), pp.103, 123.

²⁵ The Imperial Free Passage Scheme, see Chapter 3.

Two delegates, Miss F. M. Girdler, a staff member of the Oversea Settlement Committee, and Miss G. Watkin, a technical inspector from the women's branch of the Board of Agriculture, were sent to New Zealand in October 1919 by the Overseas Settlement Committee after having already visited Canada. Their brief was to obtain information regarding the present and future prospects of employment for women, and opportunities for establishing new industries for women.²⁶ In particular they were to find out in what numbers women could be employed, what accommodation might be available to them, and what training they could receive. As regards ex-servicewomen in particular they were instructed to find out what special facilities were available. Their report shows a somewhat small scale response with offers of reduction in the duration of nursing training, special domestic training courses, and courses which would culminate in women managing hostels. There were also openings for small groups of women on farms, and the reservation of twenty small sections of land for the purpose of fruit-growing.²⁷ The Minister for Crown Lands reported that 'little hope could be held out that any land would be offered on special terms to women', because the claims of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces had priority with regard to the small amounts of land available.²⁸ However, women with capital between £250 and £300 could be encouraged to proceed in purchasing holdings.²⁹

The delegation found that the demand for domestic workers was so great that if an efficient system for the registration of vacant positions were established, a steady stream of women workers 'could be absorbed for several years to come'.³⁰ As a general rule greater encouragement and need was registered in rural areas. With regard to industry, it was felt that a large

²⁶ Report . . . of the delegates, p.3.

²⁷ Ibid. p.27.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. p.16.

number of women could be absorbed, but that the rate of extension was found to be very dependent on the amount of housing accommodation available, and the housing shortage was not likely to end soon.³¹ Women seeking to become wage-earning professionals were not to be encouraged for similar reasons.³²

This unencouraging report was a problem for New Zealand policymakers who sought to encourage female migration. Except for a brief period during World War I, the gender distribution of New Zealand's population had always shown males exceeding females, however the proportion was declining (as can be seen in table 4) because of an increase in female migration.

table 4:

Census year	females per 1000 males
1911	896
1916*	993
1921	956
1926	956
1936	972

*1916 was of course unique because of the large proportion of the male population overseas.

Source: Census of New Zealand, 1921, 1926, 1936.

The Empire Settlement Act of 1922, which arranged a joint scheme of assisted immigration financed jointly by the New Zealand and Imperial governments, reflected in its granting of assistance the Dominion's desire for young women.³³ In its 'free passage' classification, girls and women under the age of 40 were eligible, as were domestic servants, while by comparison only boys under 19 were paid no money at all. (see Appendix 3)

Despite attempts to promote imperial unity through the encouragement of female immigration in the 1920s, it had limited success. Class and political divisions in Britain, as well as British Labour's suspicion of any new commitment to Imperialism, and the changing nature of the female workforce in Britain (as well as in New Zealand) all served to undermine the

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., p.27.

³³ See appendix 3.

programme.³⁴ Historian Brian Blakeley has argued that much of the frustration arose out of the British government's inability to stop private charitable institutions alienating those on whom it was dependent for success, be they benefactors or clients.³⁵ While official and private migration schemes purported to have in mind the same goals they were often at cross purposes. If the British government had difficulty in directing its social imperialism policy at home, then it would be even harder controlling it from the sheer geographic distance of the dominions.

As early as October 1919, New Zealand parliamentarians discussed the "great shortage" of domestic servants in the country.³⁶ At that stage, the Prime Minister, William Massey, declined to initiate a scheme of immigration from Britain until after the return of New Zealand soldiers from World War One, but intimated that this would in time be done. By implication British excess population was to solve labour shortages in New Zealand. In fact, the government advertised that the Immigration Department kept a record of those New Zealanders who required the services of female assisted immigrants.³⁷ It had been publicly acknowledged that domestic servants were needed and wanted in New Zealand. New Zealanders had heard of the reports of female unemployment in Britain, and therefore the logical conclusion was to transport the alleged surplus of English women to meet the demand in New Zealand.³⁸ In this way two problems - the shortage of domestic workers in New Zealand and the shortage of work in Britain - would be solved while at the same time strengthening the Imperial bond.

By the mid 1920s, New Zealand had become a predominantly urban society with a growing state bureaucracy, causing a labour drain from rural to urban

³⁴ Blakeley, p.422.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *N. Z. P. D.*, Vol. 185, October 17, 1919, p.483.

³⁷ C. S. Simpson, "The Social History of the Christchurch Young Women's Christian Association, 1883-1930," MA (Sociology), University of Canterbury, 1984. p.213.

³⁸ *The Press*, 10 March 1920, p.2.

areas with large scale bureaucracies and organisation developing within the urban sector. Women, who had previously been constrained to the private sphere, were drastically effected. Work became more specialised, and occupation was the crucial factor in determining social status, lifestyle and income.³⁹ Birth rates fell, as did maternal and infant mortality rates, and more women than ever before joined the non-agricultural workforce.

The changes were an international phenomenon and World War I was primarily responsible. For the first time women had been called on to do their patriotic duty in traditional male occupations and having learned how, there was some difficulty in finding acceptable means of returning them to the private sphere when war had ended.⁴⁰ The effect on population was concerning;

The fact remains that many thousands of women since July 1914 have been jerked out of the ruts in which their lives seemingly were to lie, and a very small proportion will be either fit or willing to return to those ruts. . . the results of such work are yet to be discovered, and how far those four years of war work will have to be pad for by the next generation, or, in many cases, by the non existence of the next generation. An occasional "such a splendid healthy baby too," is no proof that far-reaching mischief may not have accrued from the physical and nervous strain. Four years' war-work and one splendid baby is a poor exchange for an eventual four splendid babies.⁴¹

In 1921 the New Zealand Board of Health facilitated an enquiry into the rapid spread of venereal diseases, and the public at large were horrified, viewing the matter as evidence of an ongoing moral decay brought about social change.⁴² Fears of racial decline and intellectual invasion by non-white races can be seen in Aldous Huxley's satire, *Brave New World*.⁴³ With these examples

³⁹ E. Olssen, "Women, Work and Family: 1880 - 1926" in P. Bunkle and B. Hughes (eds) Women in New Zealand Society, Auckland, 1980, p.159.

⁴⁰ This point was well noted in an open letter from the president of the New Zealand Field Centre, Y. W. C. A. in MS Papers 1536, Folder 2:102D, Y.W.C.A. of New Zealand Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁴¹ United Empire, Vol. 10, No. 7, July 1919, pp.322-323.

⁴² E. Olssen, "Towards a New Society" in G. Rice (ed) The Oxford History of New Zealand (2nd edn) (Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1992), p.254.

⁴³ A. Huxley, Brave New World. A Novel, (London, Windus and Chatto, 1925).

in mind, there was, as will be discussed, a very clear view of a desirable "type of migrant" as defined by what it was not.

W. A. Carrothers commented in 1929 on the special difficulties in finding women of the right age and character to be assimilated socially in the dominions.⁴⁴ High on the list of priorities was a concern for female immigrants to be morally above reproach, and this can be seen in the language and policy decisions in Britain and New Zealand. In Britain ex-servicewomen were entitled to free passage if they bore a "good character."⁴⁵ On ships where women were assisted by government sponsorship, they were attended by a matron, and in New Zealand the Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) had an understanding with the Immigration Department that any female immigrants authorised by them would be "passed fit" to enter New Zealand.⁴⁶ The Y.W.C.A. also planned that its hostels should be run by superintendents who would supervise "the welfare and conduct of the inmates".⁴⁷ The Women's Division of the Farmers Union (W.D.F.U.) was concerned to encourage the Immigration Department to bring unmarried male and female immigrants out to New Zealand on separate boats.⁴⁸ "Suitability" entailed the possession of contemporary social mores and morals, but there were other factors involved. The ideal migrant woman was also considered to be a dedicated and uncomplaining lass who was not against menial labour. Since the nineteenth century, young women who did not object to hard work and who lacked pretension had been regarded as ideal settlers in New Zealand.⁴⁹ The women were required to blend in with the New Zealand

⁴⁴ W.A. Carrothers, Emigration from the British Isles with special reference to the development of the Overseas Dominions, (London, P. S. King and Son Ltd., 1929).

⁴⁵ Young Women's Christian Association of Great Britain, Survey of 1919, MS Papers 1536, folder 2:10:2D, Y.W.C.A. Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Note on Women's Hostels or Community Houses in *ibid*.

⁴⁸ Women's Division of Farmers Union, Minutes, 23 July 1929, no.27.

⁴⁹ C. Macdonald, A Woman of Good Character. Single Women as Immigrant Settlers, (Wellington, Allen and Unwin New Zealand Ltd., 1990), p.103.

community, as "no woman immigrant can hope for success unless she is fully prepared to become a New Zealander."⁵⁰

These concerns about the moral calibre and physical characteristics of potential immigrants were carefully policed. British war brides were required by the New Zealand Army to supply character references when notice was given of wedding plans.⁵¹ In a similar vein, unwed mothers were considered by the S. O. S. B. W. to be morally unsuitable for official assistance, meaning in effect that they were unable to immigrate.⁵² As late as 1938 supporters of female emigration in Britain maintained that "what the Dominions and Colonies needed more than anything else at the moment was young British women to go out and become the hard-working wives of settlers."⁵³ With this in mind G. R. Fail, a letter writer to the *Christchurch Press* answered a debate on domestic servants by endorsing a report from Britain;

That domestic servants are better citizens than girls who sit on office stools or serve in shops, was the view expressed by Miss Grace Young, a housemaid in Belgravia, who was the second speaker in the series, "the Future of Domestic Service," to broadcast from 2LO and 5XX.

Miss Young advanced as her reason the fact that the girl in domestic service is doing work which will teach her how best to manage her own home when the time comes.⁵⁴

Along with the specialisation of women's employment came the tendency to elevate motherhood and "wifery".⁵⁵ As a cult of domesticity, it relied on the assumption that reproduction was the primary function of women, and created a demanding definition of female moral supremacy based on the spiritualisation of motherhood and home management matters. The very real

⁵⁰ *The Daily Chronicle* commenting on the Women's Delegation Report as cited in *The Press*, 15 September 1920, p.7.

⁵¹ V. Wood, *War Brides. 'They followed their hearts to New Zealand'*, (Auckland, Random Century New Zealand Ltd., 1991), p.20.

⁵² Kennedy, p.410.

⁵³ Extract from the Bulletin in A.J.C.P.5425:715, M567/2-290, Unofficial Migration conferences: Empire Migration and Development Conference 1937: Empire Development Council.

⁵⁴ *The Press*, 1 February 1937, p.14.

⁵⁵ Olssen, "Women, Work and Family," p.180-181; E. Olssen, and A. Levesque "Towards a History of the European Family in New Zealand," in P. G. Koopman Boyden (ed) *Families in New Zealand Society*, (Wellington, Methuen Publications Ltd., 1978), pp.6-10.

work employed in the running of a household was superseded by its conception as a duty. The domestic acts of women became imbued with the self-sacrifice of empire and the heroic ideals of war and victory;

It is healthy for men to consider that the foundations of empire are built of the sacrifices of gallant women, and it is right to realise how thankless is the task of the victims. One is jealous on behalf of these ladies; one feels that they should have a literature all their own, so intimately mixed are they in the honour, in the very existence of the British dominion.⁵⁶

Since the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, (1859) a great deal of attention had been paid to the problem of 'quality' with regard to humankind, a study that became known as eugenics.⁵⁷ Fundamentally, the recurrent theme in eugenics was an obligation of the individual to promote the future of their race through sexual restraint outside of marriage and, inside marriage, the careful planning of fertility with an equally carefully chosen mate. Quality and quantity of people yet to be born were discussed. Information of a eugenic nature was promulgated from the United Kingdom and filtered throughout the Empire, with the decline of birth rates causing particular concern in New Zealand. The Eugenics movement never gained popular appeal in New Zealand but it did gain a great deal of support in academic, political, medical and social service circles.⁵⁸ The theories placed pressure on women to live up to feminine ideals of perfection and purity and to realise to the perfection of the "white" races through motherhood.

Children's health and welfare gained a new significance in public discussion throughout the empire from the turn of the century.⁵⁹ In New Zealand the increasing importance placed on children in the 1920s and '30s served to elevate the status but decreased the actual powers of mothers. The Plunket Society for example was decisive in defining the duties and obligations

⁵⁶ *United Empire*, Vol.20, no.4, p.199.

⁵⁷ A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem. A Study in Human Evolution*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1922), p.35.

⁵⁸ P. J. Fleming, "Eugenics in New Zealand 1900-1940" M.A. (History), Massey University 1981.

⁵⁹ A. Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood", *History Workshop*, No.5, 1978.

of mothers, in particular stressing the necessity of training for motherhood and the dangers of working girls not receiving "adequate preparation".⁶⁰ Furthermore the campaign for 'safe maternity' launched by the Health Department in 1924, served to medicalise childbirth and ante-natal care in the name of the general good - its slogan was 'Perfect motherhood is perfect patriotism'.⁶¹ The state had taken over many of the responsibilities previously faced by families and relatives, and consequently the Plunket society is indicative of the proliferation of institutions which endeavoured to reform and rehabilitate deviants.

Women and girls, while believed to be the upholders of a nation's morality and purity, were also considered to be at risk of being recruited into prostitution, or being taken advantage of by unscrupulous husbands. These fears were universal, but particular concerns arose regarding the plight of inexperienced British girls facing settler societies for the first time. It was in this situation that the W. D. F. U. had approached the Immigration department suggesting the separation of British migrants into 'male' and 'female' boats.⁶² Once in New Zealand, the colonial divisions of imperial voluntary organisations like the Y W C A and the Girls Friendly Societies began to meet the needs of a fluctuating society and the government began to rely upon them to undertake responsibility for referring women in general to safe boarding houses on its behalf.⁶³ In the case of the Y W C A, subsidies covering approximately half of expenses were made by the New Zealand government in the first decade after World War One, but there was no dialogue with their British counterparts.⁶⁴ The organisation acted in what it perceived to be the interests of its own society.

⁶⁰ Truby King cited in Olssen and Levesque, p.179.

⁶¹ Mein Smith, p.23.

⁶² Women's Division New Zealand Farmers Union, Minutes, 23 July 1929.

⁶³ Simpson, p.67.

⁶⁴ MS Papers 1536, folder 2:10:2D, Y.W. C. A. records, Alexander Turnbull Library.

Interestingly, special care was taken to anticipate the accommodation needs of women venturing into the rural sectors, so that every locality could care for women if the need arose.⁶⁵ Since the nineteenth century there had been greater employment opportunities for women in the towns, but by the twenties the rural community had a loud voice in the national chorus for 'suitable' women.⁶⁶ The urban drift exacerbated the need for farm labourers and domestics and when these were not forthcoming "the whole burden was thrown back on to that gallant soul, the farmer's wife" which often had a detrimental effect on her health and ability to bear future generations of farming stock.⁶⁷ The rural sector did, however, have certain requirements as one nurse reported;

They did not consider that it was necessary to send nurses out to New Zealand, as the New Zealanders did not want them except to back-block work, and that the people in the back-blocks wanted nurses which it would be impossible to train anywhere. In other words, they wanted too much . . . I think it is a very difficult thing to get the right sort of woman for the country life here. To begin with, she must be very well trained and have absolute confidence in herself, for there is often no doctor for 30 or 50 miles. The doctors like to have a well-educated woman to work with, of course, and the patients want someone who will do all the work they have been doing before their illness, for only about one out of 50 has help of any sort, therefore she must be able to wash, cook and clean, look after the children and at the same time often be up a good deal in the night. Besides this she must often be contented to sleep in the same room as the patient and other children, occasionally on a bed made up on the floor; in fact, she must be a woman who can put up with a great deal, and there are not many well trained women who will do it, I am afraid.⁶⁸

It was hoped that women might be encouraged to take up positions as domestics in rural sectors to gain useful experience for their ultimate roles as wives of farmers. This scenario did eventuate in some instances. Sixteen year old Martha Andrew came out to New Zealand in 1927 to work as a domestic in the Flock House Girls scheme, and during her placement on a rural estate, met her future husband Malcolm Hepburn, a farm labourer. Martha went on to

⁶⁵ Simpson, p.221.

⁶⁶ J. Graham, "Settler Society", p.126.

⁶⁷ Comment made by Mrs Barrer, representative of the Women's Division of the New Zealand Farmers' Union, in notes of a deputation to the Prime Minister, 21 February 1938 in L1, 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association, 1936-55, National Archives.

⁶⁸ Excerpt cited in Monk, p.96-97.

have a very settled rural life with her husband and children, often assisting in their various positions in a domestic capacity.⁶⁹ In other instances, however, rural placements did not meet success, and for this reason it was recommended that women making application for government assistance be required to state in writing whether they wished to live in a town or rural district.⁷⁰ Rejection was felt by some newcomers in rural areas, an indication that public thought did not necessarily echo government policy. The pejorative term "Homie" was used to describe all that was abhorrent about the awkwardness and lack of enterprise of recent immigrants⁷¹ Dorothy Ford, who with her mother and sister came to work as domestics in the North Island remembers vividly their reception;

The train pulled up at the little station of Hukanui and we were met by our employers. Mother expressed her feelings about the burnt country and immediately realised she had said the wrong thing. For this had been no natural holocaust, but a pioneering triumph; the land had been cleared by fire and axe, and you "homies" had better realise what a tremendous work has been done. We don't want any whingeing "homies" here; they can go back home. Hard work and pride in our achievements is what you new people better understand...⁷²

Rural women were considered important economic units especially in farming where families were equated with free labour. The plight of the farmer's wife was stressed, and at times the decline of wheat production was linked with the absence of domestic labour on farms.⁷³ In the twenties, recent immigrant Mrs M. Reece ran the family farm in Port Chalmers with the help of her four young boys while her husband was ill with rheumatic fever for three months.⁷⁴ As well as tending the land, they operated farm machinery and the dairy. There is little wonder that the sudden transition from British household

⁶⁹ Author's conversation with Evelyn Quigley, 19 June 1995.

⁷⁰ Report . . . of the delegates, p.27.

⁷¹ Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*, pp.106-109.

⁷² D. A. Ford, *Journey From Stranger's Rest*, (Wellington, Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1989), p.81.

⁷³ Report . . . of the delegates, p.4.

⁷⁴ F. Reece to J. Malcolm, 17 July 1995. Copy in author's collection.

to the New Zealand back blocks and the unexpected and heavy extra duties that this entailed may have taken many domestic servants by surprise.⁷⁵

This institutional concern for welfare was particularly noticeable as regards the treatment of women immigrants. In 1920 the New Zealand division of the Victoria League resolved to set up committees at various shipping ports to meet women workers and work with other organisations to arrange lodgings, an action which initiated its association with the S O S B W.⁷⁶ The Girls Friendly Society catered only to a small proportion of immigrants; it was concerned with quality rather than quantity.⁷⁷ The Society and the Salvation Army were encouraged to provide accommodation for the new arrivals, while the Y W C A also undertook the inculcation of domestic skills. They also helped immigrants find employment, which they at one time administered under the Flock House Scheme for girls, a domestic training scheme provided by the New Zealand Sheepowners' Acknowledgment of Debt to British Seamen Fund.⁷⁸ Aside from assisted immigrants the Y W C A also catered to the needs of independently funded women who came to them as a last resort.⁷⁹ From around 1923 or 1924, the Immigration Department entered into a formal contract with the Dominion Committee of the Y W C A. This had arisen as a result of the recommendations of the 1919 delegation from the S O S B W which has already been discussed.⁸⁰ The contract provided that 24 hours of free accommodation would be given to

⁷⁵ There is evidence of a similar response in Canada. See United Empire, Vol.7, no.1, January 1920, p.11.

⁷⁶ B. O. Stokes, A History of the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship, (Auckland, The Victoria League, 1980), p.11; Letter from the Secretary of the Victoria League to Mr A. W. Snelling, Dominions Office, 1 December 1938, in A. J. C. P.5418:700, M458/1-73, Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women; staff; policy; finances, etc. The League claimed no responsibility for the organisation of migration, but instead intended that its "Settlers' Welcome" should be supplementary to the work of the other societies in providing friends for settlers. The New Zealand Division of the Victoria League was the official representative of the S. O. S. B. W. in New Zealand.

⁷⁷ B. Harrison, "The Girls' Friendly Society 1874 - 1920", Past and Present, Vol. 61, November 1973, p.126.

⁷⁸ See chapter four.

⁷⁹ M. S. Papers 1536, Y. W. C. A. of New Zealand Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁸⁰ Report of the delegates, pp.8, 13.

female immigrant workers at the port on arrival or en route to their position, and in doing this, the Y W C A would be under contract to hold a certain number of beds on call.⁸¹ The Government provided £500 per annum for this service, from 1921 to 1925 inclusive, (even before the contract had commenced). In 1923 the Victoria League had another visit from a member of the S O S B W.⁸² Non-governmental organisations had some measure of support from both the imperial government, through the S O S B W, and the colonial government in New Zealand. This point has been overlooked by Dane Kennedy in his discussion of the Overseas Settlement Committee, when he emphasised the aloofness of the state in the face of philanthropic work explained in imperial terms.⁸³

The New Zealand public's reaction to immigration in this period was cautious. The plan to bring English girls out to New Zealand to work on assisted passages appears at times to have caused considerable debate, with public reprimands of "homies" like the Ford family. In a letter which appeared in the *Press* in late February 1920, "Indignant Colonial" wrote:

in most cases it will only be the scum of England that a free passage out here would lure. Not many girls of good standing in England would leave their home and country to go and work in a strange land among strangers.⁸⁴

Sides were quickly taken with "Gentle Annie" replying on 2 March that even the scum of England was preferable to the sediment of the colonies.⁸⁵ B. Smith felt that "The English girls are only too glad to get here on any conditions," while "An English Girl" disagreed, using the experience of returned soldiers to back her view:

Ninety-nine out of every hundred boys who went to England would say 'The English girls for mine'. And why? Because an English girl is more of a chum - not stand-offish - and certainly does not revert to the rouge and powder-box so early in life. Why I

⁸¹ Simpson, p.219.

⁸² Stokes, p.11.

⁸³ Kennedy, p.404.

⁸⁴ *The Press*, 20 February, 1920, p.7.

⁸⁵ *The Press*, 2 March, 1920, p.6.

have just seen a girl of fifteen here, just left school and in her first position in the office, as highly painted and decorated as a vaudeville star.⁸⁶

Clearly the perception of the British as superior was a contentious issue for colonists, and in this sense the subject of British immigration served to exaggerate the problem. Many British settlers in New Zealand were passionately attached to their birthplaces, referring to Britain as "Home", while at the same time arousing nationalistic ire in those native born New Zealand citizens who believed New Zealand to provide the best climate and lifestyle.⁸⁷ Public viewpoints were coloured by personal experience and New Zealand nationalism. Similarly, government policy looked more at the common heritage shared with many New Zealanders, and was cautious in its relationship with the British Crown. The government did not desire to add to the numbers of those already seeking aid from charitable institutions, and thus 'desirable' female migrants were required to fit the New Zealand government's criteria. It was not suggested that 'desirables' be permitted entry and 'undesirables' be excluded. Rather, immigration policy, and its applications were consciously aimed at encouraging those immigrants who were most needed by giving them free passage, as this report by the Canterbury branch of the Victoria League indicates:

In January we renewed our arrangement with the S. O, S. B. W. to open nominations, and although we have not received our full quota of 24 girls a year, owing to the high standard of cooking required, we hope to do so in 1930, when we confidently expect those whom we are privileged to help will reach 100. A training centre has been opened within easy reach of London which will be available for two months free intensive training in cooking and housework for girls wishing to come out to New Zealand.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ *The Press*, 28 February, 1920, p.9; 1 March 1920, p.7.

⁸⁷ Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*, chapt. 6, pp.79-93.

⁸⁸ Stokes, pp.11-12. Any mention of additional settlers in this period by the government always considered the availability of employment and housing in New Zealand, with the optimum final description of immigrants having been 'absorbed'. See Annual Report of the Department of Immigration, 1920-1927, *A. I. H. R.*, D-9.

Blithe assumptions appear to have been made about the ultimate suitability of importing Britain's surplus "white" European stock, with problematic consequences. A certain amount of colonial pride existed in the belief that, contrary to "white" Australia's convict origins, New Zealand had been conquered by the "courage and initiative" and "untiring industry" of Britain's "best colonising stock".⁸⁹ Yet, many of the women who were assisted financially to the colonies by the British government came from workhouses, and industrial areas where the cycle of poverty was almost impossible to escape, and the morality so prized by the colonial elite may have been lacking.⁹⁰ Interestingly, the Final Report of the 1918 Dominions Royal Commission makes note that the proportion of domestic servants to the total British population had decreased, particularly in lower working class areas like Lancashire and parts of London.⁹¹ It was from these areas that most of New Zealand's British immigrants were coming, bringing with them notions of self-improvement. Yet little notice was paid of this trend away from domestic service by the Imperial government which was also experiencing a shortage of domestic servants, as it gave heed to the dominion's desire for domestic servants.

Handbooks containing facts on the various dominions were available to interested women through the Colonial Office. Yet the price of passage was often daunting for women. Dorothy Ford's mother raised the passage money by selling her jewellery and a few other treasured items. The ten pounds the family needed to have on arrival in New Zealand was obtained by looking after an eighteen month old baby on board ship.⁹²

⁸⁹ A. R. Pratt, The Pioneering Days of Southern Maoriland, (London, The Epworth Press, 1932), p.11.; Sinclair, p.12.

⁹⁰ Mention is made of the backgrounds of previous female migrants in a letter from A. P. Castles to Miss Edith Thompson, 6 March 1939, in folder M 326/22 in A. J. C. P.5417:694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

⁹¹ Dominions Royal Commission. Final Report, (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918), p.233.

⁹² Ford, pp.74-75.

For those women who married New Zealand soldiers abroad, the fares for basic third class accommodation were provided and paid by the New Zealand government and for the most part the young women were able to board the same ship as their husbands. The couples were separated, with the men sleeping in hammocks on the lower decks, but were able to spend time together in the various entertainments aboard ship.⁹³ Women with babies quickly adapted to their shipboard surroundings; on some ships nappies were dried on the railings of the engine room.⁹⁴ Many women were pleasantly surprised by the welcome they received on arrival, however on at least one occasion, the boat was met in Auckland by a group of women waving banners saying 'War Brides Go Home'.⁹⁵ The incident was early warning of an attitude of defensiveness that existed among popular, if not working class, culture. Native-born New Zealand citizens were critical of the use of British immigrants to fill New Zealand jobs and at times this jealousy may have extended into other areas.⁹⁶

An important alternative to voluntary migration and marriage to a male New Zealander for intending migrants was the assisted immigration scheme under which female immigrants were scrutinised and carefully supervised throughout a complicated selection and placement process. Domestic workers were eventually chosen after application to the High Commissioner in London. Three sets of tests were required to be passed; women were required to have good records in the services, they were required to pass a Dominion Authorities test in London, and they had to be accredited by the Y. W. C. A. authorities, with a colonial-born woman named as being responsible for their selection. To qualify for free passage under the Empire Settlement Act 1922, domestics were required to be employed as such at the time of application, and

⁹³ Wood, pp.34-35.

⁹⁴ Jim Parsons to J. Malcolm, 30 July 1995. Copy in author's collection.

⁹⁵ Louisa Scott's experiences as told by her daughter Stella Arroll in Wood, p.62. Also, chapt.6: Life in New Zealand.

⁹⁶ Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*, pp.104-108.

to give a written undertaking to continue that occupation for at least twelve months after arrival. They also had to be aged between eighteen and forty years. While on board ship, the women were overseen by a matron appointed by the New Zealand government, and on arrival were met by the Girl's Superintendent of the Immigration Department. For those with pre-arranged positions or those who had friends to go to, arrangements were made for ongoing travel, while for those remaining, the Superintendent arranged to place them with applicants for a female assisted immigrant. In doing this the women's previous work details were considered and statements were made by the individual involved, because of concerns that girls might immigrate with skills that were "not needed in New Zealand".⁹⁷ The tone suggested selection for "suitability". The *Lyttelton Times* tried to calm fears;

Most of the girls waiting for a chance to come to New Zealand are girls who have joined one or other of the Army Service corps in England, and have had experience in canteen work and cooking. They are not, as many people imagine, munitions workers unsuited to the duties required of them.⁹⁸

For many female immigrants, the move into service in New Zealand was one of necessity rather than choice. Francis Rowley arrived in New Zealand in 1927 as the first member of a family from Northumberland. When plans for immigration changed, and a brief marriage ended, Francis took her young son and went into domestic work. Employment opportunities, while more open than for their mothers and grandmothers, were still quite limited for the young women of the 1920s and 30s. While fast becoming an economic necessity, jobs for "girls" were seen as temporary rather than permanent measures;

Any office boy can dream of the day when he will sit in a swivel-chair and direct a swarm of subordinates, any cadet-reporter can picture his editorial future, but few girls are spurred on by ambition of this kind, for it has little chance of being realised.

⁹⁷ This fear itself is interesting because the same concern was not expressed about young men immigrating to work on farms, who for the most part were school boys who had little experience if any of farming.

⁹⁸ *The Lyttelton Times*, 10 March 1920, p.3.

As a result, many girls appear to regard their jobs as a stop-gap, or if marriage is not achieved, as a consolation.⁹⁹

Such statements clearly indicate the prevalence of the separation of what were believed to be public and private spheres. Female employment was seen as a temporary aberration based more on economic necessity than personal choice. Mary Williams, a New Zealand born girl, experienced both the physical demands on the female workforce and the tacit economic pressure of the depression years;

Strange that in a world of job-snobbery, service behind a counter was considered superior to service at table. Strange too that the economic rewards for the former were less than the latter.¹⁰⁰

In fact, such trends reflected the demand for domestic service as well as its growing decline as a career option. It had two well acknowledged disadvantages; the indefinite number of hours in the working day, and the inferior social status of the domestic worker.¹⁰¹ Many references had been made in New Zealand and in Britain, to the urgency of the need for domestic servants. However negotiations over the need to limit working hours were met with reluctance.¹⁰² It seemed that New Zealand's middle class employer was unwilling to acknowledge the need for anything other than an understanding between workers and employers, although the prospect of limitations had become a not so distant possibility.

However, assisted immigration could not solve the shortage of domestic workers. For as quickly as foreign workers were imported, larger numbers of women were leaving the profession.¹⁰³ The scheme to assist domestic servants

⁹⁹ C. Robinson, "Jobs and the Woman," *Tomorrow*, Vol. 1, No. 16, 1935, p.15.

¹⁰⁰ M. Findlay, *Tooth and Nail. The Story of a Daughter of the Depression*, (Auckland Penguin Books Ltd., 1974), p.36. For more personal accounts of the drudgery of domestic service in New Zealand, see J. Duff, "Lady Help" *Tomorrow*, Vol. 4, No. 6, January 18, 1938, pp.186-188.

¹⁰¹ Report . . . of the delegates, p.4.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p.5

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

was eventually discontinued on 31 March 1931. In the meantime employers like letter writer 'Veritas' became aware of this decline;

I suggest every present wife, also presumptive ones, make it a condition that all husbands are to cease employing female clerks except in special cases, then you might get some decent help in the homes, and so bring about larger and healthier families...¹⁰⁴

While domestic service remained the most significant paid employment for women until World War Two, it is significant that once given other forms of employment, women quickly accepted alternatives. Furthermore the domestic servant who married and who found with her husband a new comfort and freedom was reluctant to return to servile circumstances. While the percentage of the female workforce employed in domestic service was 54.6% in 1881, it had decreased to 24.7 % in 1936.¹⁰⁵ In order to counter this, one citizen suggested that improvements be made to conditions in order to improve the status of domestic employment and thus attract more intelligent girls¹⁰⁶ It is interesting that a lack of interest should be associated with a lack of intelligence, as if the only domestic servants available were those who had unwittingly fallen into that occupation.

Niche industries thrived during the late 1920s when enterprising factory owners set up their own efficient workshops using the latest technologies, and often young women found work in these factories. The Christchurch Dry Cell and Battery Company for example, employed "dozens of girls" by 1933 to operate electric drills, lathes and soldering irons.¹⁰⁷ Also evident was the expansion of the dairy industry which took in large numbers of young women.¹⁰⁸ The Kaiapoi Woollen Mills advertised in March 1920 that it had

¹⁰⁴ *The Press*, 20 March 1920, p.9,

¹⁰⁵ Statistics cited in Simpson, p.214.

¹⁰⁶ C. Robinson, "The Domestic Situation," *Tomorrow*, Vol. 2, No. 2, November 6, 1935, pp.20-22.

¹⁰⁷ S. Eldred-Grigg, *New Zealand Working People, 1890-1990*, (Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1990), p.47-48.

¹⁰⁸ *N. Z. O. Y.*, 1932, p.70.

positions for a hundred women.¹⁰⁹ Positions were available to "every class of women" and competent workers would be paid between £2 and £3 per week. By comparison, teenager Dorothy Ford and her sister earned five shillings a week in domestic service in rural households.¹¹⁰ Domestic service could not compete with clearly delineated working hours, good wages and the comradeship of working with other women with similar ages and interests.

Eventually the government was forced to address the issue of declining interest in domestic service. By December 1936, the promotion of domestic service as the primary focus of female immigration appears to have changed, despite the almost constant demand for home help in rural areas. At an informal discussion with the Oversea Settlement Board Walter Nash denied the need for British migrants for domestic service due to "improvement and extension of labour-saving devices."¹¹¹ Furthermore, in an official meeting with the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in June 1937, Prime Minister Savage declined an offer for co-operation in the recruitment of domestics in Britain, stating that as the New Zealand housewife was "accustomed to doing her own work" he doubted the need for domestics.¹¹² In reality the government was still receiving calls for domestic servants, but more heed was given to developing secondary industries which needed all the labour they could get. No doubt the government also appreciated that the call of factory work was much more appealing for young women.¹¹³

The market for female labour changed entirely. When, in June 1939, the government proposed to restart female immigration from Australia and Britain, it was for the purpose of factory rather than domestic work.¹¹⁴ The

¹⁰⁹ *The Press*, 11 March 1920, p.8.

¹¹⁰ Ford, p.88.

¹¹¹ Nineteenth meeting of the Overseas Settlement Board, 1 December 1936, in A. J. C. P.5418:700 M458/1-73, Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women: staff: policy, etc.

¹¹² 22 June 1937 in A. J. C. P.5416:694, M326/1-54, New Zealand migration policy: general.

¹¹³ Mr Armstrong and Dr Harrop, 20 July 1937, p.4 in L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46, parts 1-2. *National Archives*.

¹¹⁴ Mr Boyd Shannon, High Commission in Wellington, to Sir Thomas Inskip, Secretary of State

Federation of Footwear Manufacturers had criticised the new scheme to fill labour shortages for its lack of attention to the shortage of women, and without doubt it had some effect.¹¹⁵ Falling gender proportions were also evident in the field of textiles, and to a lesser extent in education, while by comparison growth occurred in the area of office work, sales assistance, and also in medicine. Openings for women were now also focused in the hospitality trade, in areas such as hotels, clubrooms, and tea rooms.¹¹⁶ The expansion of women's work opportunities served to contribute to a domestic servant shortage.

In the post depression decade there were very few openings for women emigrants, except for occasional jobs in schools. Even so, the Director of Education warned the S O S B W in 1936 that while teachers from overseas had previously been "rapidly absorbed", he could not guarantee employment as all appointments were made by local Education Boards.¹¹⁷ In 1938 the S O S B W noted a decrease in migration to New Zealand with fewer teachers sailing, and those that did noted the high cost of living and wages at a comparative rate to Britain.¹¹⁸ Migrants by very definition were those who sought to better themselves, and there was very little chance of that in these circumstances.

In January 1939 Miss Edith Thompson, a representative of the S O S B W was sent on a visit to Australia and New Zealand to "develop opportunities" for migration. Miss Thompson met with various government representatives, but found official opposition to the old inter-governmental assisted passage

for Dominion Affairs 16 June 1939, folder Z88/9 in A. J. C. P. 5531:957, Z86/2-12, New Zealand: unemployment: 1938-39 report of Department of Labour; correspondence and press clippings on general situation.

¹¹⁵ Sir Harry Batterbee, High Commissioner in Wellington, to Sir Thomas Inskip, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs 16 August 1939, folder Z88/10 in A. J. C. P. 5531:957, Z86/2-12, New Zealand: unemployment: 1938-39 report of Department of Labour; correspondence and press clippings on general situation.

¹¹⁶ Nineteenth meeting of the O.S.B.

¹¹⁷ Appendix from Memorandum on Increasing the Migration of Women with special reference to South Africa and Rhodesia, 1937, in A. J. C. P. 5418:700, M458/1-73, Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women: staff: policy, etc.

¹¹⁸ S.O.S.B.W. Annual Report 1938, p.9, in *ibid.* Sailing numbers were only 20 as compared to 31 during 1937.

agreement.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Miss Thompson was inclined to agree with the complaints of former migrants, stating that the conditions of domestic work were not significant enough to warrant the Society urging women to emigrate to Australia and New Zealand to improve their status, despite the acute shortage.¹²⁰ There were very few positions for professional women, and a great reluctance on the part of employers to become involved in the responsibilities surrounding nomination.¹²¹ What prevailed instead was a romantic but misguided conception of domestic service by the country's "middle class". Miss Thompson was pithy in her response;

Both in Australia and New Zealand the whole conception of any increase in migration, whether refugee or British, simply means a further supply of domestic workers. It is made quite clear that it is servants that are wanted, well-trained women in caps and aprons, definitely not "home-helps". Most people overseas who have not been in frequent touch with this country have an idea of England as it was when their parents or grandparents left it, and picture domestic servants of that generation - overworked, underpaid and poorly appreciated, they simply cannot understand why they do not flock in their thousands to Australia now that assisted passages are once more available. Large numbers of domestics have been nominated and very few have arrived, which is a great puzzle to the would be employers. . .¹²²

Governmental policy on female immigration in the interwar period was largely preoccupied with responding to public demands and filling the labour niche. Little concern was given to considering "white" women's potential status as anything other than a stop-gap in employment or British wife and mother. This point became embarrassingly clear when former British citizens married men who were defined as aliens under World War One Imperial legislation, which was in full force until 1923¹²³ They effectively lost citizenship and became aliens within their own countries, being required to "register" to the police their status and situation on a regular basis.¹²⁴ The situation was not

¹¹⁹ Letter from Mr Boyd-Shannon, High Commission in Wellington to Mr Wiseman, Dominions Office, in *ibid.*

¹²⁰ E. Thompson, *Report on visit to New Zealand and Australia*, 5 July 1939 in A. J. C. P., 5418:700, M458/1-73, Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women: staff: policy, etc..

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Registration of Aliens Amendment Act 1917* 8 Geo. V, 1917, No.12.

¹²⁴ *Registration of Aliens Amendment Act, 1922* 11 Geo. V, 1920, No. 7, pp.13-14.

fully rectified, to give women the option of choosing their individual nationalities until 1935.¹²⁵

A certain degree of contradiction permeated the class considerations of the women's emigration effort, for however zealous the urge to send out unmarried gentle women to elevate the social life of the colonies, the fact remained that only "white" British domestic servants were wanted in any number in the 1920s, as the delegations to the colonies had discovered.¹²⁶ Both the New Zealand and British governments treated the issue of female migration as one of service, if not to the imperial ideal, then to the strengthening of colonial labour or the creation of a suitable society. It was a message of imperial excellence delivered both by the Empire's leaders and by that very sign of moral decay, the working women of the British Emigration movement. Sexist assumptions about women's dependence on men formed an essential part of state and imperial policy, and the Imperial and Dominion governments were not in any hurry to acknowledge women's right to citizenship in their own right.¹²⁷ Without doubt, however, the general population were not as interested in the ideals of empire as they were in personal experience. The better educated and more prosperous members of the community drew on memories and reports of the class structure in Britain in their bid to recreate the divisions of labour within their own homes. In reality the relative scarcity of domestic servants meant that they were hard to find and hard to keep, and it was this very strong bargaining position that made servants bold in their demands. For the colonial public, day to day considerations of the willingness of "homies" to fit in coloured considerations, and for many a negative experience of migrants who had little appreciation of the realities of the New Zealand experience, stayed longer in the public

¹²⁵ British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Amendment Act, 1934-35, s.3(2), 25 Geo. V, 1934-35.

¹²⁶ Kennedy, p.411.

¹²⁷ J. Bhabha, F. Klug, and S. Shutter, (eds) Worlds Apart. Women under Immigration and Nationality Law, (London, Pluto Press, 1985).

consciousness. Like the government the people of the Dominion of New Zealand wanted more women for home help, but like many former migrants they were in some cases intolerant of the period of adjustment that was required, both on their part and on the part of the "homies". The changeover came when the focus became economic recovery and social change and women were needed in secondary industry.

PART II

Chapter six: Aspects of "Alienness"; defining the terms.

As has been discussed in the introduction, white New Zealand citizens held the majority of both the social and political power throughout the inter-war period. Society had an urban focus in European-style towns and cities, and Western religion had been established since the early nineteenth century. Under the English-style parliament, only four seats of 80 were allocated to Maori. While the Maori aspect of New Zealand society was acknowledged, they were considered to be an interesting but temporary stage in a process of "assimilation." For example, the first Inspector of the Native School system for Maori education, J. H. Pope, believed that Maori children could be 'rapidly and painlessly Europeanised'.¹ Statisticians were fond of dissecting the social structure. So-called "Europeans" represented 99.2 percent of the total population in 1921, while Maori, and "Race Aliens" made up 0.35 and 0.45 percent respectively.² Of the total number of inhabitants, 74.3 percent had been born in New Zealand. By 1936, an impressive 80.41 percent had been born in New Zealand,³ and Maori were still only 5.23 percent of the total population.⁴ "White" government provided governance for all, and this ratio was to be maintained. The 1921 Census acknowledged that "the maintenance of a pure European or "white" standard of population has been invariably a consideration of immigration legislation."⁵

¹ Sutherland, *The Maori People Today*, p.275, 416-17.

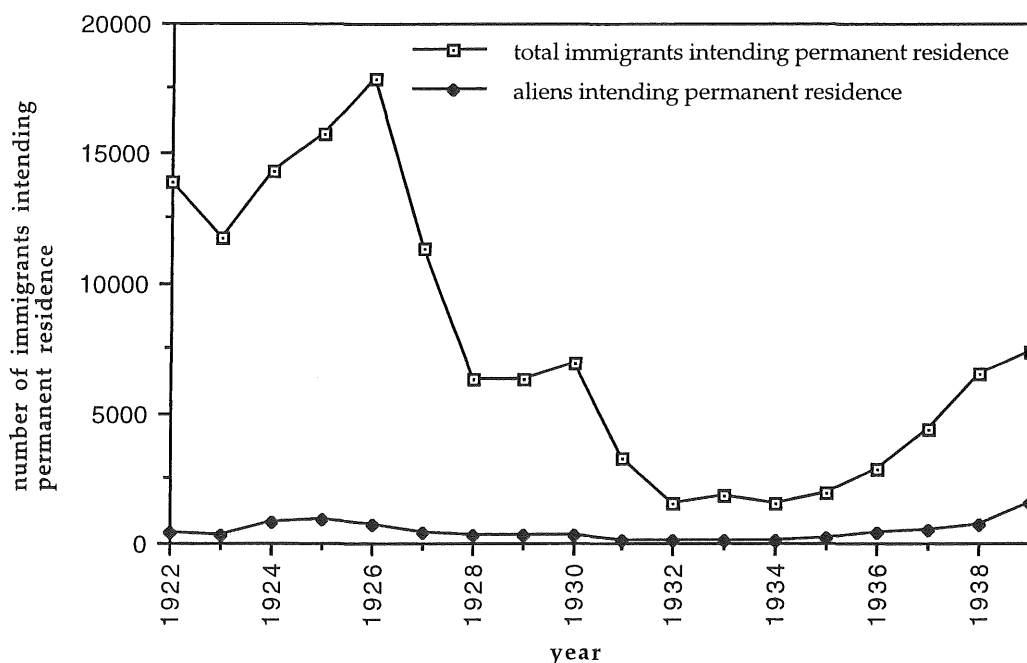
² *Census of New Zealand, 1921*. Part VI. Race Aliens. "Half-castes" are included in the Maori figure.

³ *Census of New Zealand, 1936*. Birth Places.

⁴ *N. Z. O. Y.*, 1937, p.830.

⁵ *Census of New Zealand, 1921*. Part VI. Race Aliens, p.1.

Figure 8:



Source: NZ O Y, 1924-1942.

The issue of colour delineated New Zealand's existing society, and immigration followed the trend set by the dominant "white" society (see figure 8). Non-British immigrants were small in number and tended to cluster.⁶ The numbers immigrating were modest primarily because the people involved were, unlike many "British" migrants, responsible for their own passage costs and settlement needs. The institutionalisation of racial and national differences in New Zealand brought a frequently hostile public and governmental response that was disproportionate to the numbers involved. This section (chapters six, seven and eight) focuses on illustrating how colonial British migrants and other migrants (among them 'contract' migrants and refugees)

⁶ Clyde Griffen makes similar comments about the incidence of foreign migrants in the American hinterland, in "Fairburn's New Zealand. From a Vantage of North American studies", New Zealand Journal of History, Vol.24, no.1, 1990, pp.102-3.

could be differentiated by citizenship status and immigration laws.⁷ These "others" were known contemporaneously, as "aliens" or "race aliens". The treatment of non-British immigrants is general for a specific reason. The Yugoslavians, Italians, Greeks and Pacific Islanders and others were destined to make important contributions to New Zealand society, but at this time they occupied an awkward "no man's land" as "aliens", distinguished from British, from Maori and also from "race aliens".⁸

The formation of the language of racial and national differentiation was of British origin, as it consisted generally of legal principles. Many of these British laws were pre-empted by economic concerns. For example, the first differentiation between the rights of subjects and the rights of "aliens" can be traced back to the thirteenth century and the formation of land law.⁹ Similarly the process of establishing nationality by descent was caused by concerns of the inheritance of property.¹⁰

Furthermore nationality law was also formed by the issue of control over one's own subjects. The terms used in twentieth century legislation were coming into use, when in most instances they had different meanings. In the thirteenth century, the legal aspect of feudal allegiance was explored, and it was at this stage that the development of fuller rights for "alien" subjects (naturalisation) occurred.¹¹ This legal distinction had more to do with grades within the society than with "Englishness" or "foreignness."¹² In 1290, Edward I expelled all Jews from Britain. While some would have been "aliens" in that they were not born in Britain, many were likely to have been subjects whose

⁷ R. Miles, *Capitalism and Unfree Labour: Anomaly or Necessity?* (London, Tavistock, 1987), pp.147-8, 224.

⁸ I will be using these two terms because they were a contemporary construction used for immigration purposes.

⁹ A. Dummett and A. Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens and Others. Nationality and Immigration Law*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), p.27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.35-38.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.28-29.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.30.

expulsion had more to do with religious prejudice rather than racial hatred.¹³ The Jews were the one group in British society who had managed to exist comfortably outside the Catholic church.¹⁴

Five hundred years later the issue of borders became fundamental to the alien question. Under the Aliens Act 1793, the movement of subjects was restricted into and within the kingdom, so that revolution could be prevented.¹⁵ Its intention was not to bar non-natives in general, but to identify and control dissidents who might collude with treasonous subjects.¹⁶ This tradition of protection by limitation of the rights of outsiders was to continue.

The course that New Zealand took regarding "aliens" was not considered beyond the country's rights, under international law and usage, to exclude the subjects of other states on the grounds of territorial supremacy.¹⁷ Within the framework of British Empire countries, "economic stringency" was considered to be a suitable justification for tighter restrictions on "alien" nationals.¹⁸ At the 1926 Imperial Conference a vague commitment was made to "Equality of status" of the autonomous communities which existed within the British Empire.¹⁹ It was with this tradition that the New Zealand principles of distinction on the basis of birth place were established.

The practise of making distinctions between the rights of natural-born and naturalised subjects had occurred in Britain since the early eighteenth century.²⁰ In New Zealand, the term "alien" was itself defined by what it was not. An "alien" was someone defined as an alien within the meaning of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914: a person who was not a

¹³ Ibid., pp.31-32.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.83.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ T. D. H. Hall, Status of aliens in New Zealand, Preliminary Paper for the Fourth General Session of the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1931, p.13.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁹ E. F. W. Gey Van Pittius, Nationality Within the British Commonwealth of Nations, (London, P. S. King and Son Ltd., 1930), p.4.

²⁰ Dummett and Nicol, p.73

British subject, someone who was not of "British birth and parentage", or someone who had acquired naturalisation somewhere other than New Zealand.²¹ "Aliens" in general were unwanted migrants in New Zealand and this is reflected by their official reception; while British and some European migrants were welcomed and encouraged to immigrate with help from the New Zealand government and with settlement assistance from other social welfare organisations. Asian migrants, for example, had largely to depend on their own resources and family connections where possible.²² A 1937 survey found that there were grades of "alienness" with differing degrees of acceptability among these Europeans;

We found no objections were raised against foreign migrants, provided these people were of assimilable stock. Preference was generally given to peoples belonging to Northern European countries. There was a distinct antipathy to Mediterraneans and such other peoples as are inclined to retain their racial and political identity in the country of settlement.²³

Aliens were expected to either dissolve in the structure of New Zealand, or to simply disappear;

It has never been anybody's business in New Zealand to take stock of aliens and their problems. The quinquennial census has ignored them since 1921; the census forms ask us to state our birthplaces, but they do not ask whether we are British subjects. The Customs Department is responsible for the admission of aliens into the country, but it is not concerned with what alien settlers do after their arrival here. The Internal Affairs Department has complete records of the foreign-born people who have been naturalised, but it is not concerned with aliens who prefer to remain aliens.²⁴

There were no clues as to how this was supposed to happen. Clearly, however, foreign migrants were to be valued if they were able to assimilate into the general population.²⁵ To be classed as alien in New Zealand society

²¹ British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act 1923, No. 46, 14 Geo. V.

²² T. C. Palakshappa, "Indian Immigrants in Waikato. A study in dynamics of institutions," in K. Tiwari (ed) Indians in New Zealand. Studies in a sub culture, (Wellington, Price Milburn and Company Ltd., 1980), p.210.

²³ New Zealand Five Hundred Club, Report of Migration Committee, in A. J. C. P.5416:694, M326/22, New Zealand migration policy: general. Scandinavians were "the least alien of aliens, melting away into the British population like snow on Wellington hills." See R. A. Lochore, From Europe to New Zealand. An account of our Continental European Settlers, (Wellington, A. H. and A. W. Reed. 1951), p.19.

²⁴ Lochore, p.11.

²⁵ For further discussion on assimilation see chapter eight.

was to be defined as different to the majority in culture, or nationality, and ideally this was a temporary state. However, while these differences were possible to overcome, differences of physical appearance could never be assimilated into the new society. Hence there was another degree of differentiation, which was not recognised in legislation but nevertheless existed for official purposes in both censuses and yearbooks. "Race aliens" were those people who were not of European race and colour, whatever their nationality. As they were visibly different, their numbers were carefully recorded.

It was expected that "aliens" would attempt to gain legally the status of "British" migrants, an expectation which supported the belief that a "citizen" was naturally superior to an "alien." While a natural-born British subject was a citizen independent of any actions of the state and could not be deprived of that nationality, an individual who was subject by manner of annexation (as the Maori were considered) was a subject by an act of the State, as was a naturalised individual.²⁶ These two groups could both have their citizenship revoked.²⁷ In Britain the process of "naturalisation" of aliens allowed the Home Secretary to convey or deny certificates as deemed to be "most conducive to the public good".²⁸

The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914 was the formulating document within the Empire on the matter of alien status and naturalisation.²⁹ As applied in New Zealand it clarified the definition of both British subjects and aliens, and detailed nationality changes. It gave clear advantages to British "subjects", that is, those people who were natural born British subjects, and promised to confer the rights and privileges of British subjects on the holders of certificates of naturalisation. While there was usually no fee payable for naturalisation, Chinese were charged £1.³⁰ The alternative was not as

²⁶ Gey Van Pittius, p.78-79.

²⁷ Ibid., pp.79-80.

²⁸ Dummett and Nicol, p.85.

²⁹ British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914, No. 17, 4 and 5 Geo. V.

³⁰ N. Z. O. Y., 1920, p.10.

appealing. Those who remained aliens were not given the parliamentary franchise, and therefore were not eligible for election to parliament. However they were able to vote in a local body election or poll as an elector or rate payer under certain New Zealand Acts.³¹

British legislation continued to provide coverage for the Dominion until the British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act 1923 adopted part II of the 1914 Imperial Act and certain provisions were declared to be part of the law of New Zealand.³² This was done for the sake of uniformity throughout the Empire.³³ The legislation was more particular, providing that aliens would continue to be classed as aliens if their naturalisation as a British subject had been acquired outside New Zealand.³⁴ A format for application for naturalisation was also set up, requiring "alien friends" to apply in writing to the Minister of Internal Affairs, supplying their particulars and a statutory declaration stating his or her intention to settle in the Dominion permanently or for a prescribed amount of time. More importantly, the legislation required that the Minister be satisfied that the applicant was fit to have the rights of a British citizen, and this was to be proven in several areas. The applicant was required to be of "good character", to have lived in the Dominion for at least the prescribed amount of time or to have lived in any of the Dominions for not less than five of the last eight years, to possess an adequate knowledge of the English language, and to intend to reside in the Dominion.³⁵ The legislation also gave the Minister of Internal Affairs 'absolute discretion' to grant or withhold certificates of naturalisation as he thought most beneficial to the "public good", and "no appeal shall lie from his decision." More specifically, the certificates could be revoked if they had been obtained by fraudulent

³¹ Electoral Act 1927 18 Geo. V, No. 44., s.15, 32. Legislature Amendment Act 1911, 2 Geo. V., No. 19, s.2; Local Elections and Polls Amendment Act 1926, 17 Geo. V., No. 42, s.17.

³² Public Acts of New Zealand, 1908-31, Vol. I, p.157.

³³ Hall, Status of aliens, p.7.

³⁴ British Nationality and Status of Aliens (In New Zealand) Act, 1923, No. 46, 14 Geo. V., s.2(1).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, s.4(1).

means, or if the individual had shown him or herself "by act or speech to be disaffected or disloyal to His Majesty."³⁶

The conception of citizenship as entailing a moral duty had a grounding within British legal history. British law was based primarily on *ius soli*, the role of birthplace in establishing subjecthood, the relationship with one's King.³⁷ In the fourteenth century the crime of treason implied an infringement of public duty and personal morality owed to that established system of government.³⁸ Under New Zealand's 1923 Act, the Governor-General in Council had the power of revocation on the grounds of public interest, or "special reasons affecting the person to whom such certificate has been granted."³⁹ Moreover, this power was exercised. Between December 1917 and the end of November 1938, 65 naturalisations were revoked, 33 of them occurring in 1918 alone.⁴⁰ A further Act in 1928 allowed that certificates of naturalisation could be granted in the United Kingdom or the other Dominions and that the status conferred on holders of the certificate would apply both in New Zealand and in other parts of the Empire.⁴¹

Alien status embodied an element of distrust, especially in times of war, when the categorisations of "friendly" and "enemy" "aliens" were applied. The Registration of Aliens Act 1917 required all people over the age of sixteen who were not British citizens either by birth or by naturalisation, to register with Police Officers throughout the Dominion. The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914 held that the wife of an "alien", children under sixteen of an alien, and "lunatics" or "idiots" were "under disability", and therefore could not

³⁶ Annual Report of the Department of Internal Affairs, A. J. H. R., 1924, H-22, pp.4-5.

³⁷ Dummett and Nicol. pp.21.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.34.

³⁹ British Nationality and Status of Aliens (In New Zealand) Act, 1923, 14 Geo. V., No. 46, s.11(2).

⁴⁰ IA 52/8, Register of revocations of naturalisation, December 1937 - 9 March 1942, National Archives.

⁴¹ British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act 1928, 19 Geo. V., No.58.

be granted certificates of naturalisation.⁴² Nor did legislation provide for British-born wives of aliens, or people with two nationalities. These individuals found themselves in positions where there was little or no legislation to fit their differing situations.

Women automatically assumed the status of alien upon marriage to an alien, despite some having been born as British citizens. While women born in New Zealand were not required to register, the legislation only provided for the retention of their natural-born status domestically. Once outside New Zealand, they "reverted" to the original status of their husbands. The legislation deeming married women to take the alien status of their husbands remained active until it was amended in 1935 to provide the option to petition otherwise in each of the countries involved.⁴³

Many thousands of women within the empire were affected adversely by this legislation. Groups gathered in London to form the Nationality of Married Women Pass the Bill Committee which lobbied the British government at length in the late 1930s to remove all disabilities suffered by married women as far as nationality was concerned.⁴⁴ One prominent figure was Miriam Soljak, whose husband was a naturalised New Zealander, and who represented the International League for Peace and Freedom. Mrs Soljak was persecuted during the first World War for failing to register as an alien, and worked for many years with Mr David Fraser from the New Zealand Labour Party, to change the legislation.⁴⁵ The New Zealand government exchanged views with the United Kingdom government and with other Dominion governments, and by 1933 provisional legislation on the subject was being prepared. Eventually

⁴² British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914, 4 and 5 Geo. 5, No.17, s.5 (3), 27.(1). However, minors might be granted naturalisation at the discretion of the Secretary of State. See s.5 (2).

⁴³ British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Amendment Act, 1934-35, 25 Geo. V, No.38, s.3(2).

⁴⁴ See A. J. C. P. 5467:814. Notes on registration by wives of naturalised British subjects.

⁴⁵ Transcript from a deputation to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 16 April 1937, p.11, in *ibid*.

in 1938 a Bill was passed in Britain which gave women the same right as men to retain their nationality or apply for naturalisation in their own right. This was adopted in New Zealand in order to create uniformity within the Empire.⁴⁶ It had taken almost two decades for the injustice to be acknowledged and adjusted.

As a Dominion, New Zealand was forming its own views on the merits and disadvantages of alien migration. The first restrictive immigration measure adopted in the interwar period, following a great deal of parliamentary debate, was the Undesirable Immigrants Exclusion Act (1919) which was aimed primarily at keeping out Germans, Marxists and Socialists.⁴⁷ As far as persons of non-British birth and parentage were concerned, applications for a permit to immigrate were required to be made to the Minister of Customs in New Zealand. In reviewing the merits of each application the Minister was required to decide whether the applicant was likely to become a charge upon the state, and whether or not his or her knowledge or ability is sufficient to make him or her a "useful citizen of the Dominion."⁴⁸

Restrictions in New Zealand and the other Dominions occurred against a backdrop of international constraint. The two main international players began to limit and restrict their immigrants according to race and the possibility of their becoming a charge on the state. In the 1920s, Britain's interwar legislation for seamen was reorganised with a pre-existing Aliens Order on more racial lines overriding cultural affiliations when it evolved into an anti-miscegenation campaign.⁴⁹ The Aliens Act of 1919 gave the Home Secretary the power to recommend Orders in Council regarding the control of any aspect of immigration that he desired. In the Order of 1920, all alien immigrants were

⁴⁶ British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1938. 1 Edw. 8 & 1 Geo. 6, No.109.

⁴⁷ N. Z. P. D., Vol. 185, 23 October 1919, pp.825-832.

⁴⁸ Report on Third Public Meeting at Evian, 9 July 1938, p.25 in A. J. C. P. 5425: 717, M.576/61-250, Emigration of political (Jewish and other) refugees from Austria and Germany to U. K. and Dominions.

⁴⁹ Rich, Race and Empire in British Politics, pp.122-135.

required to obtain work permits and any individuals who were unable to support themselves were unable to enter the country. On the other side of the Atlantic, a similar approach was being taken. Despite their "melting pot" policy the United States maintained a clause from the Immigration Act 1917 which provided that an immigrant could be denied a visa if it appeared likely that he or she was "likely to become a public charge".⁵⁰ From 1924 the United States adhered to a rigid quota system, allowing admissions on the basis of two percent of each Caucasian nationality which had been present in 1890.⁵¹

The move to restrict non-European migration was common in most European countries, and indeed every minority in a society has endured some kind of hostility from the government and from majority groups. The differentiating factor was the intensity and manifestations of racism.⁵² Racism is individual or institutional, and has been used at times as a valuable tool for colonial exploitation by superimposing a purported superiority of one culture over another. Nationalism and racism are both ideologies and behaviours and in fact can be complementary. Institutionalised racism can, for example, create the ideal conditions for nationalism, and vice versa.

A largely monocultural Anglo-Celtic society, such as interwar New Zealand, found the arrival of a new culture difficult to ignore because its presence contrasted so strongly with the status quo. We should not underestimate the power of social control in social networks, as the distinction of outsiders as being 'different' and therefore lesser or threatening, strengthens the group ethic. Nor is the level of discrimination required to be very particular. Problems can arise from an antipathy towards foreigners and the contrast they provided, and can be heightened by economic competition.⁵³ In

⁵⁰ For discussion, see P. Bartrop, "Indifference and Inconvenience: Australian government policy towards refugees from Nazi persecution, 1933-1939", Ph.D (Economic History), Monash University, 1989, p.73-75.

⁵¹ National Origins Act, 1924.

⁵² P. Panayi, *Immigration, ethnicity and racism in Britain 1815-1945*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994), p.10

⁵³ T. D. H. Hall, "The Status of Aliens in New Zealand," in *The Legal Status of Aliens in Pacific*

interwar New Zealand negative stereotyping of foreigners gave weight to national identity in the minds of members of the society and helped to justify national self-determination and sacrifice as the dynamics of racism, ethnocentrism and nationalism interacted. In this sense nationalist political behaviour can occur because there is a perceived threat to the social, economic and geographic boundaries of the nation. Threats can be posed for example, by assimilation, or immigration where concern is issued about the potential to weaken and diminish national homogeneity and to displace nationals in employment.⁵⁴

The Dominion's existing population were unable to understand the desire for a cafe culture among the more cosmopolitan migrants or the potential unattractiveness of "rugby, racing and beer." Overt displays of difference such as speaking a foreign language in the street, were considered offensive behaviour because it was believed that the immigrant was speaking about another person.⁵⁵ Many new migrants did try, for the sake of their children or to separate themselves from their previous existence, to adjust to their life as quickly as possible. However those who did not display the long-suffering and industrious colonial attitude typical of those who considered themselves established New Zealanders, or who steadfastly held on to their small national or ethnic community group, found themselves very visible in this ostensibly homogeneous white society. Some, as the Chinese and Indian communities have found, were criticised for it. There was, however, a great deal of discussion about the extent to which a minority culture had to acculturate, assimilate or integrate into New Zealand's host society. Interaction, according to T. C. Palakshappa, needed only to occur on political social and economic

Countries, (London, Oxford University Press, 1937), pp.286-7.

⁵⁴ J. G. Kellas, The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity, (London, MacMillan Educational Ltd., 1991), p.165.

⁵⁵ Interview with Ralf Unger, by J. Malcolm, 27 June 1995. Copy in author's collection.

levels and he argues that present-day Indian migrants are not under pressure from the New Zealand community.⁵⁶

There were several other problems with the rationalisation of "alienness". Figures could not reflect all those who identified with an "alien culture" in New Zealand. For certainly the numbers of foreign nationals identifying with colonies did not correlate with those enemy registrations during World War One. During World War One the Germanic peoples resident in New Zealand came to be viewed with suspicion and it was believed necessary to monitor their movement and actions, despite them previously having been considered as "suitable." Indeed, as the government was to discover, delineation along racial or national lines was not an accurate means of separating the suitable from the unsuitable. In alien migration, groups such as families and villages acted as social agents for chain migration. In terms of non-interference the advantages were obvious. No governmental resources were used in promoting or assisting migration, as the only official task was the selection of desirable migrants from the wider group. Family and friends were responsible for form-filling, the payment of passages, and the search for accommodation and employment, and they provided a home environment with which to ease the culture shock. In actual fact it would appear that for sheer lack of economic demands, Asian migrants were entirely suitable. Importantly however the attendant New Zealand authorities might well have questioned how well the newly established community allowed for assimilation, the desired goal.

There were categories of aliens who were considered more suitable than others because of their nationality. While stereotypes existed of untrustworthy race aliens, perceptions existed of various nationalities such as the Scandinavians, who were thought eminently suitable for the difficult conditions of colonial life;

⁵⁶ T. C. Palakshappa, "Indian Immigrants in Waikato," in Tiwari p.210

Big, capable men who can be relied on to do a job and to stand by their mates, they scarcely seem to be foreigners at all, they are so like us New Zealanders (which is quite properly the highest compliment we could pay to any foreigner). The language barrier too is slight.⁵⁷

Scandinavians and long-settled Germans were regarded by contemporary commentator Dr Lochore as submerged groups which were "largely absorbed into the general British stock."⁵⁸ Interestingly, the submerged stock that Lochore talks about all immigrated either in the nineteenth century or earlier in the twentieth century. However as been mentioned, the advent of war in 1914 caused an adjustment to be made to the conception of most western European nationalities as "suitable". In 1917 an order was placed in Parliament requesting the number of 'Austrians' (Slavs and Dalmatians) employed by the Government in the North Island and the pay they received per day.⁵⁹ There was a grand total of 166 people working mostly in public works.⁶⁰ Record was also kept of the numbers of German and Austrian-born people in New Zealand's mental hospitals, with similarly small numbers being returned.⁶¹ However, over time the suspicion abated. In 1925 Germans and Austrians regained the status of other visitors and could be granted temporary permits from the Minister of Customs, and by 1928 they were given the same treatment as other Europeans.⁶²

Prior to 1926, immigration policy was to treat French, Belgians, Danes, Americans and Italians, as special classes of desirable immigrants.⁶³ Until 1926 the system of permits was a matter of formality, as nearly all applications were granted. In January of that year, the whole policy was thoroughly reviewed in Cabinet, with the result that all restrictions became more fixed.⁶⁴ The people

⁵⁷ Lochore, p.16.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.15.

⁵⁹ LE 1 1918/127 (133) Austrians employed by the govt, National Archives.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ H-MHD 1 2/4/6/8, Repatriation of Aliens, National Archives.

⁶² Ponton, pp.79-80.

⁶³ Ibid., p.74.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.76.

most affected were Yugoslavians and Jews, who made up 1,282 of the 2,407 aliens who arrived between 1922 and 1925, as Cabinet decided to place a ceiling of 3,500 on the Yugoslavs in particular.⁶⁵

The Dutch were considered similarly suitable; in June 1938 the High Commissioner and the New Zealand authorities spoke with the Vice-Consul for the Netherlands with a view to encouraging migration.⁶⁶ The migration numbers themselves were modest, as migrants were responsible for their own passage and settlement expenses. Indeed this was not surprising, as in the previous one hundred years, only about one hundred Dutch had settled in New Zealand.⁶⁷

In New Zealand the arrival of Chinese, Indians, Scandinavians, Germans and other non-British Europeans in the interwar period were significant not for the numbers that they added to the population, but for the variety they added to its perceptions. In this sense, this study is preoccupied not with the different ethnic and racial groups, but the perceptions of groups which had the highest public profiles. Negative publicity was still publicity, and arguably contributed to conceptions of race and nationality. The parochial nature of interwar New Zealand society helped to create the assumption of "British" superiority and an intolerance to difference, and this was very much reflected in legislation. Aliens and Race aliens, were untrustworthy, ignorant and unassimilable, while "British" and some suitable "non-British" nationalities, were loyal hardworking, and difficult to distinguish from the general population. However, as Part One has argued, the blanket trust in the suitability of British migrants was sometimes misplaced, as was the blanket legislation provided to cover it. In a similar vein the conception of unsuitability on the basis of nationality or race

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.76-77.

⁶⁶ Garnett to Boyd Shannon, 29 August 1939, A. J. C. P.5416:694, M326/46, New Zealand migration policy: general.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

was also an arbitrary ruling without benefit of real consideration. In this instance racism was a tool of the developing nationalism.

Chapter seven: A novel situation: Refugees in New Zealand, 1919-1939.

The search for asylum is an age old problem. However, the twentieth century posed even greater difficulties than before because the international nature of the problem was recognised. Furthermore there was an increase in possible destinations created by modern travel, and the displacement caused by world war, and the extension of border controls such as passports or visas.¹ New Zealand became for the first time, a logistically possible destination, and for the first time, a New Zealand government was faced with the prospect of accepting "alien" individuals for humanitarian reasons, rather than immigrants with undisclosed histories. This chapter looks at how the New Zealand government and its constituents confronted international pressure to embrace European refugees as migrants, particularly in the late 1930s.

Firstly, however, what was a refugee? The only guidance we have on this subject is from League of Nations agreements relating to the status of certain homeless peoples. Support of the League was a general part of New Zealand government policy. For example, a 1926 Arrangement defined a Russian refugee as "Any person of Russian origin who does not enjoy or no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and who has not acquired another nationality"². In 1936 and 1938 slight changes were made to the first definition. Refugees came to be understood as all persons leaving Germany, as opposed to Russia. However by 1938, a person was excluded from refugee status if they left for "reasons of purely personal convenience."³ New Zealand supported all these definitions

¹ A. Binzegger, New Zealand's Policy on Refugees, (Wellington, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1980), p.5.

² 1926 Arrangement modifying and completing the Arrangements concerning the Issue of Certificates of Identity to Russian and Armenian Refugees dated 5 July 1922 and 31 May 1924, 89 League of Nations Treaty Series 47, cited in G. Melander "The concept of the term 'refugee'," in A. C. Bramwell (ed) Refugees in the Age of Total War, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1988), p.7.

³ 192 League of Nations Treaty Series 59, cited in Melander, p.7.

on principle. In practise however, there was no such thing as a "refugee" in New Zealand legislation and immigration practises, so there was no need for any closer definition. Legislatively, refugees fell loosely into one general category. Under the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920 no "alien" could enter New Zealand unless they were in possession of a permit for which individual applications had to be made directly to the Dominion Government in Wellington from the country of origin of the applicant.⁴ As refugees from Europe were not "of British birth and parentage", and in the absence of any other applicable legislation covering the treatment of refugees, they were covered under this term, and subject to the requirement for permits. In humanitarian terms, however, the word refugee was to gain more public currency, as news of the international situation spread in the late 1930s.

Furthermore, the term "refugee" has some problems of use in the New Zealand example, because no "refugees" as such came into New Zealand until after the inter-war period. New Zealand did not officially accept refugees until November 1944 when the *General Randall* arrived from Europe carrying a group of Polish children. While people coming to New Zealand in the interwar period may have been known to be refugees they were not officially classified as such as they immigrated independently under normal immigration procedures. Furthermore the classification of nationalities and ethnic groups changed between 1919 to 1939, which would also have hampered identification. For example, Jews, the major ethnic and religious group persecuted by Nazi Germany, were considered to be a separate group from 1936. Prior to that a German Jew had been classified as a German.⁵ In effect the classification finally recognised the differentiations made internationally some time earlier. The peace settlement at the end of World War One had attempted to untangle the problems of Europe by creating different

⁴ This law has been covered in some detail in chapter six.

⁵ Ponton, pp.108-109.

nationalities.

There were certain to have been a number of people who were *de facto* refugees because of the escalating numbers world-wide, although the exact numbers cannot be found through a lack of official records. There were many millions of refugees from Hitler from 1933 onwards, and while not all of them were Germans and not all were Jews, they shared a history of persecution. For our purposes the progress of Jews within the immigration system is significant because somehow the international term "refugee" became synonymous with "Jewishness" in the understanding of New Zealand residents. Most of the applications granted between 1933 and 1935 were for German Jews fleeing Europe, who numbered a mere thirty eight.⁶ The Labour Government acknowledged granting 337 permits in the 1935-1938 period to Jews which they estimated, was a third or quarter of all those who had applied.⁷ Of these people, a few arrived as early as 1934, but the majority of refugees came from 1936 on, coinciding with the elections in New Zealand.⁸ In July 1939, Sir Harry Batterbee, the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Wellington, noted in an official brief that "a steady, if small, stream of refugees from Central Europe continues to arrive by every mail boat"⁹. Several historians have made attempts to number those who arrived. R. A. Lochore estimates that around 1,100 unofficial refugees, most of them with some Jewish association, came from central and Eastern Europe to settle in New Zealand between 1933 and 1941.¹⁰ L. M. Goldman has argued that the pre-World War II figures for refugees were as low as 711.¹¹ However while European aliens are not

⁶ Ibid., p.99.

⁷ Deputation from Five Million Club to Nash, 21 March 1938 p.6. in L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46, parts 1 and 2. National Archives. On August 17, 1938 the Minister for Immigration acknowledged a large increase in the number of applications for permits. N.Z.P.D., Vol.252, p.451.

⁸ A. Beaglehole, "'A Small Price to Pay' Refugees from Hitler 1936-1946", M.A. (History), Victoria University of Wellington, 1986, p.14.

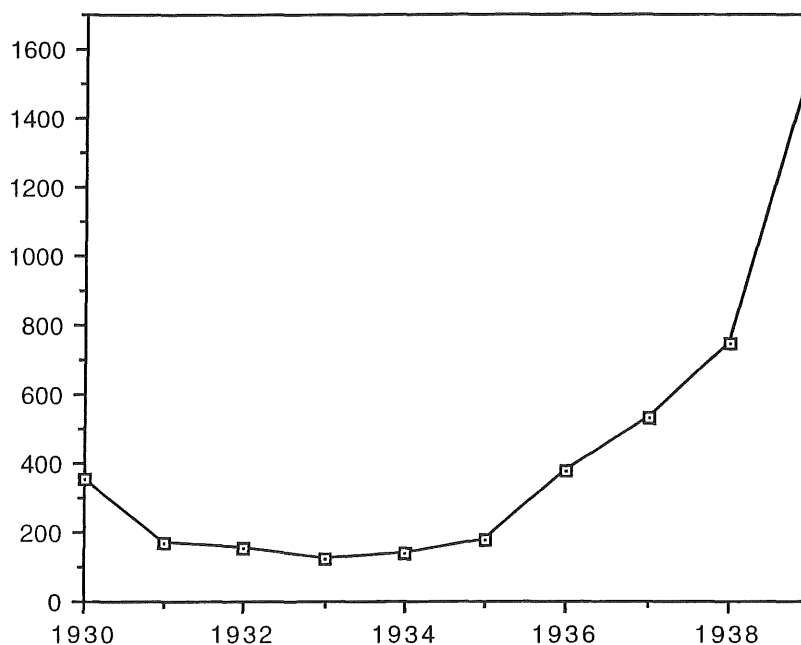
⁹ Brief to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 12 July 1939 in A. J. C. P.5421:706, M529/61-139, Settlement of Jews in the dominions in general and in specific countries.

¹⁰ Lochore, p.71

¹¹ Goldman, p.229.

distinguished in official records from other aliens, my own research indicates that there was a marked increase in "alien immigration" at this time (figure 9);

Figure 9: Numbers of aliens immigrants intending permanent residency in New Zealand, 1930-39.



Source: New Zealand Official Yearbooks, 1934-42.

It has been generally recognised that the first large scale refugee movement of this century was caused by the Russian Revolution of 1917. Between 1918 and 1922 around one and a half million Russian nationals were compelled to leave their country because of the Bolshevik Revolution, post-revolutionary civil war, and famine.¹⁰ While records cannot tell us exactly how many refugees and exiles of the 1917 Russian Revolution came to New Zealand, it is interesting to note that the register of aliens in July 1918 recorded 504 Russian adults over the age of fifteen living here. It cannot be assumed that all of

¹⁰ Figures cited in Binzegger.

these people would have been refugees as their periods of residence were not given.¹³ Within two years that number had dropped to 284, and then a year later had dropped further, to 142.¹⁴ One explanation is that many Russian nationals may have used New Zealand as a transit stop before immigration to other parts, and another is that the increasing prioritisation of returning troops from Europe may have discouraged many from coming. Other dislocated peoples may have come in the early 1930s from the Sino-Japanese War. However, this is difficult to substantiate, as without official refugee status Chinese refugees were indistinguishable from the modest but steady flow of Asian migrant labour. At any rate, restrictive legislative prohibited the immigration of large numbers of migrants from Asia, as will be discussed in chapter eight. From 1933 another refugee problem arose as a result of ethno-religious and political policies adopted by the German National Socialist government, and it is on this particular group and their impact that we will focus.

It is not certain how many refugees wanted to emigrate, but could not because of the barriers put in place by legislation. Lochore has vaguely estimated that as many as 50,000 refugees applied for permits to enter New Zealand.¹⁵ In her 1986 thesis, "A Small Price to Pay' Refugees from Hitler 1936-1946", Ann Beaglehole argues that while not all these people would have reached New Zealand, a great deal more would have been discouraged from even applying for a permit.¹⁶

The permits were granted at the complete discretion of the Minister of Customs, who considered each application on its individual merits, a situation unlike that of other countries with refugee quotas.¹⁷ The policy of restriction

¹³ N. Z. O. Y., 1918, p.75.

¹⁴ N. Z. O. Y. 1920, p.12; N. Z. O. Y. 1921-22, p.55.

¹⁵ Lochore, p.81.

¹⁶ Beaglehole, p.16.

¹⁷ Interview with Herbert Roth by D. A. Crosado, 29 May 1986, Oral History Centre, Wellington. The imposition of this procedure, by the Undesirable Immigrants Exclusion Act 1919, was strongly opposed by Labour M.P.s in the House who argued that it gave the Minister

was relatively common within the Empire. In Britain the Secretary of State had almost absolute power over aliens, and in Australia the Minister of Immigration was given unconditional discretion, while in South African boards of Immigration had the authority to rule on individual cases.¹⁸ Officials in New Zealand treated refugee appeals on an individual basis, preferring to consider the 'types' and 'kinds of workers' rather than making any blanket commitment.¹⁹ Discussion at the Dominions Office in London and in *The Dominion* newspaper suggests that the presence of friends or relatives in New Zealand willing to give guarantees for refugees, or possession of "substantial means" could help a refugee's case for settlement.²⁰ Ann Beaglehole raises the possibility of "very special cases" who may have gained permits. Indeed, other writers have noted New Zealand's tendency to hand-pick the "best people"; that is, only those Jews with money and qualifications.²¹ On at least one other occasion, personal connections gained permits for a family;

Financier friend in England had a friend in New Zealand and he would write to him about coming to New Zealand. . . This friend turned out to be Walter Nash, Minister of Immigration and Finance and Customs and he was the man who issued these permits to come in. New Zealand had no system of immigration by right; in America.... in the U. S. you had a quota according to various places and you went on a waiting list, when your number came up, you know, they ask you to come to the embassy or consulate and get your visa. New Zealand had nothing like this. It was entirely at the discretion of the minister and in getting a letter from this friend, Walter Nash sent out a permit for the whole family.²²

Nash's personal interest in this case went further, for when the outbreak of

dictatorial powers, and could be abused. See *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol. 185, pp.827-830; Ponton, pp.40-42.

¹⁸ Ponton, p.63.

¹⁹ Mr Jordan's comments from a meeting held at the Dominions Office 24 November 1938 in A.J.C.P.5426:718, M582/67, Settlement of Sudeten German Democrat Refugees in the Dominions.

²⁰ Batterbee, Assistant Undersecretary of State, Dominions Office to Professor Bentwick of the Council for German Jewry, 22 December 1938, in A.J. C. P. 5421:705, M529/1-60, Settlement of Jews in the dominion in general and in specific countries; Excerpt from *The Dominion*, 7 October 1936, in L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46, parts 1 and 2. *National Archives*.

²¹ Goldman; D. McGill, *The Other New Zealanders*, (Wellington, Mallinson Rendel Publishers Ltd., 1982), p.84.

²² Interview with Bert Roth by D. Crosado, 29 May 1986. Oral History Centre.

war invalidated the Roth family's permits, Nash personally revalidated the permit of young Bert Roth who was interned in France at the time. Ralf Unger's family was only able to gain permits after several 'desperate letters' contested the turning down of their initial permit, and attempts in 1937 and 1938 to bring over extended family failed.²³ In a letter to the family at that time, Walter Nash argued that it was not advisable to accept Jewish migrants because of an alleged inability to assimilate.²⁴

From 1936 onwards the Minister received an increasingly large number of applications for entry, and the Jewish community in New Zealand corresponded with many European refugees who were seeking assistance. Highly qualified professional people implored officialdom with promises of any kind of manual labour in return for immigration certificates.²⁵ The phenomenon was a global one in which New Zealand was included. One option was the creation of a quota system which involved local or national authorities agreeing to receive a share of refugees seeking asylum. Yet throughout the interwar period there was no quota system for refugees, nor was there any plan to operate one.²⁶ The New Zealand government preferred to consider each application individually; the imposition of a quota system would have abolished its own discretionary powers on the issue. The call for the introduction of a quota system was, however, raised by those who supported increased refugee immigration.²⁷

The League of Nations

²³ Interview with Ralf Unger by J. Malcolm, 27 June 1995. Recording in the author's collection.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See Nash's comments in "Deputation from the Five Million Club," p.6. ; Batterbee, assistant Undersecretary of State, Dominions Office to Professor Bentwick of the Council for German Jewry, 22 December 1938, in A.J. C. P. 5421:705, M529/1-60, Settlement of Jews in the dominions in general and in specific countries.

²⁶ Beaglehole, p.17.

²⁷ New Zealand Refugee's Emergency Committee, Christchurch Branch, "Memorandum on the Refugee Question," undated, in Minute Books, 1938-42, MacMillan Brown Library; Ponton, p.113.

While it has been said that New Zealand's participation in international refugee work in the interwar period was negligible,²⁸ New Zealand did contribute to the administrative costs of the various refugee offices through its contributions as a League of Nations member. The League tried to provide a degree of legal protection and security for refugees. The New Zealand Government deplored "any diminution in the efforts made by the League of Nations for the assistance of refugees".²⁹ However, whether this entailed any concerted effort to defend the rights of the stateless is debatable.

In 1921 the League of Nations had created a High Commission to deal with the international problem faced by Russian refugees, and during the years that followed the body was required also to aid in the relief and settlement of Greek, Armenian, Assyrian and other refugee groups. In principle the League accepted responsibility for the legal and political protection of certain types of refugee, and agreed on the policy of temporary intervention. Several private aid groups like the Red Cross gained international recognition and protection under its umbrella. In 1933 the League formulated a convention relating to the International Status of Refugees in which all members agreed to

establish conditions which shall enable the decisions already taken by the various states with this object to be fully effective, and desirous that refugees shall be ensured the enjoyment of civil rights, free and ready access to the courts, security and stability as regards establishment and work, facilities in the exercise of the professions, of industry and of commerce, and in regard to the movement of persons, admission to schools and universities. . .³⁰

After the death of the High Commission's head, Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the League created the International Nansen Office as a temporary agency from 1931 to 1938. From 1939 the High Commission and the Nansen Office were amalgamated.

²⁸ Binzegger, p.8

²⁹ Report of the Representative of the Dominion of New Zealand on the fiftieth Assembly of the League of Nations, Geneva 1937, in A. J. H. R., 1938, A-5, p.28.

³⁰ Convention relating to the International Status of Refugee in JC 1, Accession number W1190, 1934/43/8, National Archives.

In practise the League's action for refugees suffered, as did the rest of the body, from impotence. The very character of the League implied impartiality on the matter of national politics and a stance taken to protect people driven from a country was potentially inflammatory to actual or potential state members. From June 1924 it was agreed that the technical problems of employment, settlement and migration should be handed over to the International Labour Organisation. Yet in May 1938 the League of Nations was fixated on the minor issue of administration of refugee protocols. New Zealand's High Commissioner in London, W. J. Jordan was dismissive of the progress made in that instance;

As the plan (to amalgamate the two offices) is yet to be considered by the Assembly, which may modify it, and as the dissentient voices which were heard last year may be heard again, no useful purpose may be served in analysing it now except to say that it provides for the amalgamation of the two organisations...³¹

Arguably, then, the New Zealand government was aware of the inability of the organisation to work effectively on the League members behalf. But this did not appear to have any bearing on its acknowledged humanitarian support of refugees. There is evidence to suggest that the issue was viewed as an international issue irrelevant to the internal operations of a small country in the South Pacific. In 1926 New Zealand's representatives at the League of Nations noted that "New Zealand's interest in this question (refugees) is a purely academic one, and, in the absence of instructions, no statement from the Dominion Delegation seemed to be necessary"³². Moreover, it is possible that the country's very geographical distance from Europe prevented the New Zealand government from taking any greater interest in the refugee problem, for it took the Internal Affairs department almost eleven months to accede to the League of Nation's convention relating to the International status of

³¹ "Report of the Representative of the Dominion of New Zealand . . . at the League of Nations," 1938-39, A.J.H.R. A-5A, 1939, p.14.

³² "Report to the Representatives of the Dominion of New Zealand on the Seventh Assembly of the League of Nations," 1926, A. J. H. R., A-5, 1927, p.13.

refugees.³³

Legislation

Australia's restrictive legislation and the "White Australia" policy that this encapsulated is infamous, as is South Africa's policy of racial segregation. In particular, Australia introduced restrictive legislation on alien immigration during the late inter-war period in order to oppose a perceived influx of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe.³⁴ In New Zealand, the immediate post war period spawned legislation limiting the admittance of foreign nationals to New Zealand territory. Noticeably, the post-war years were marked by legislation which indicated a distrust towards the Empire's former enemies. The 1919 Undesirable Immigrants Exclusion Act, for example, served to block any former subjects of Germany or of Austria Hungary from arriving in New Zealand without a license from the Attorney-General.³⁵ By 1920 the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act required all people not of "British birth and parentage" to have permits to enter New Zealand, and to take an oath of allegiance upon entering the country.³⁶

R. A. Lochore argued that before World War Two there was no alien registration of any sort and no way of even estimating the number of foreign-born people in New Zealand.³⁷ He is, however, ignoring the existence of the Registration of Aliens Act 1917, which required the registration of all "aliens", that is, people over the age of fifteen who were not British subjects either by

³³ Request from League of Nations for accession by NZ Government to Convention relating to International status of Refugees. J C 1, Acc w1190 1934/43/8, League of Nations. Conventions relating to the International Status of Refugees, National Archives.

³⁴ S. D. Rutland, 'Australian Responses to Jewish Refugee Migration Before and After World War II,' The Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol., no. 1, 1985, p.29

³⁵ Undesirable Immigrants Act 1919, 10 Geo. V, No. 44.

³⁶ Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920, 11 Geo. V., no. 23. This legislation and the debates on in are treated in N.Z.P.D. Vol. 187, 16 September 1920, pp.1018-1022, 21 September 1920, pp.1107-1111, and Vol. 188, 29 September 1920, pp.32-38.

³⁷ Lochore, p.11.

birth or naturalisation.³⁸ Registration required identified aliens and wives of aliens who may have become alien by marriage, to hand deliver personal details including address, nationality and residency status to a police officer and they would then be furnished with a certificate which had been issued by an officer. Any changes of address were to be notified in person to the registration officer.

The Act was made even more comprehensive when amended in 1920. Women who had become aliens by reason of marriage to an alien, alien children who had reached the age of 15, and aliens who had changed their name since the previous Act, were required to register.³⁹ From 1923 there was a legislative relaxation in attitude towards aliens as the Act was suspended.⁴⁰ Once in possession of a certificate of naturalisation former "aliens" were allowed to acquire property and engage in any occupation in New Zealand, like any natural-born citizen.⁴¹ By 1928 naturalised aliens were allowed to own land, and no special reference was made to particular countries of origin.⁴² Yet by 1931 some uneasiness appears to have returned. The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act of that year provided that regulations prohibiting the landing of any people of a specified nationality could at any time be put in place as a matter of expediency.⁴³ This legislation and subsequent amendments were deemed active until the end of 1936. In effect, this was useful for two things. It came to be used as a way of ensuring that the majority of migrants were still British, and that immigration as policy was not reactivated because of ongoing economic concerns.⁴⁴ In the words of William Polson, the member for Stratford, "if suitable immigrants could be brought from the Old Country

³⁸ Registration of Aliens Amendment Act 1917, 8 Geo. V, 1917, No.12.

³⁹ Registration of Aliens Amendment Act 1920, 11 Geo. V, 1920, No. 7.

⁴⁰ See discussion in N.Z.P.D. Vol. 201, 31 July 1923, pp.439-452.; 8 August 1923, p.622.

⁴¹ British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act 1923, 14 Geo. V, No. 46.

⁴² British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act 1928, 19 Geo. V, 1928, No. 58, s.13.

⁴³ Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931, 21 Geo. V, 1931, No.2, s.2.

⁴⁴ For example, see N.Z.P.D. Vol. 248, pp.118, 294, 854.

without adding to the unemployment problem it would be a very desirable thing to do".⁴⁵ In this sense the interpretation became more important than the original intention of the act; it conceded to the government the power, as it saw fit, to prohibit anyone from entering the country. If the Attorney General was satisfied "that any person not permanently resident in New Zealand who is disaffected or disloyal, may be prevented from landing in New Zealand or may be ordered to leave New Zealand."⁴⁶ The wording suggests that extra control was necessary for non-permanent residents.

By the late 1930s concerns began to arise again about the prospective number and status of aliens in New Zealand. In 1935 the New Zealand Committee of Imperial defence, a body consisting of representatives from the Armed Forces, the police and internal affairs, commissioned a report on the treatment of aliens in war, and began to consider the position of "enemy prisoners" and "internees". The terminology was subjective in that it created a conception of European aliens - former nationals or nationals of enemy nations - as untrustworthy.⁴⁷ In July 1937 the Organisation for National Security, a division of the Prime Minister's office, met to discuss existing legislation on aliens and at this time they created an aliens subcommittee.⁴⁸ This subcommittee then began, over the space of the next two years, to discuss details of legislation and policy for the treatment of aliens in wartime, such as the ages for alien registration, and the suspension of all naturalisations in September 1939.⁴⁹

In general terms, then, New Zealand had in place a number of laws restricting and selecting alien immigration during the interwar period. Britain

⁴⁵ N.Z.P.D. Vol. 246, 18 August 1936, p.519.

⁴⁶ Comptroller of Customs, E.D. Good, to the secretary of the Emergency Precautions Committee, 28 June 1937, in E. A. 1, 89/2/4. Part 1. 14.6.39 -15.8.48. Regulations for the Control of Aliens. National Archives.

⁴⁷ See chapter 8 for discussion of "the Other."

⁴⁸ Minutes of a meeting of the Emergency Precautions Committee held on the 12 July, 1937 in EA 1 89/2/3 Part 1. 12.7.37. - 10.11.41. Aliens Committee. Minutes. National Archives.

⁴⁹ EA 1 89/2/3 Part 1. 12.7.37. - 10.11.41. Aliens Committee. Minutes; EA 1 89/2/4 Part 1. 14.6.39 - 15.8.48. Regulations for the Control of Aliens. National Archives.

also had strong limitations on immigration, placing emphasis on the admission only of those aliens who had the economic resources for re-establishment. The one exception to this rule was the admission of Jewish refugees from Germany who, it is argued, had the special unconditional support of a large Jewish community in Britain.⁵⁰ As one historian has explained, while the British Government encouraged its own immigration to the Empire, alien immigration to Britain was discouraged.⁵¹ Similarly, while New Zealand maintained its ethnic homogeneity over the interwar period by passing a number of acts favouring the entry of British immigrants, it also discriminated against the immigration of non-white, and non British peoples with all this legislation and administrative practise. These decisions were deliberate, giving legislative muscle to the conception of "aliens" as "unsuitable" by rationale of their place of birth.

It was not until late 1939 that any move was made to discuss in parliament the opening up of New Zealand to refugees. In the last week of August, the Legislative Council spent three days debating a motion supporting an acceleration of admission of suitable refugees, and the setting up of a Committee of Enquiry to consider the matter on the grounds that there was "an urgent need for a larger population in New Zealand".⁵² Discussion focused on the failure of natural increase to stem the nation's population decline, a matter of grave concern.⁵³ While detractors argued for population supplementation from the United Kingdom, the issue's champion, Labour legislative councillor Thomas Bloodworth, maintained that as Britain suffered from the same problems, the best solution was to accept more refugees.⁵⁴ In fact Mr

⁵⁰ J. H. Simpson, *The Refugee Problem. Report of a Survey*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1939), p.344.

⁵¹ Bhabha, Klug, and Shutter, p.27.

⁵² Thomas Bloodworth in *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol. 255, 25 August 1939, p.585. See also pp.585-98; August 31 1939, pp.700-702. Born in 1882, Bloodworth's socialist beginnings were with the Carpenter's Union, a link which might explain his exclusionist view of immigration. For more details on Union attitudes to aliens, see chapter 8.

⁵³ See chapter 5.

⁵⁴ This view was also aired in other officially circulated papers. See "An Englishman's Views on

Bloodworth was not advocating the admission of German Jews on a large scale, but rather the acceptance of those he deemed "suitable refugees".⁵⁵ Despite this amendment the motion was not passed until 31 August, three days before the outbreak of World War Two.⁵⁶ The government's response was sluggish, and may perhaps be best described as a half measure.

New Zealand's small population was perceived as a weak link in the defensive system,⁵⁷ and therefore care needed to be taken when prospective immigrants were being considered. More people in New Zealand was interpreted to mean there would be more defenders against what was seen to be an imminent foreign menace.⁵⁸ Furthermore, New Zealand's under population was believed to be a sore point to other overcrowded nations, and it was commonly understood that if New Zealand was not quickly filled with white people it would quickly and undesirably be filled with "coloured" peoples;

But the British lands are now everywhere in frontier areas. An empty frontier is a temptation. We must man the frontiers.⁵⁹

The issue of taking refugees ran against a number of policies within New Zealand and without. Britain's influence was declining both as an industrial nation, and also as colonising Empire, as national self-assertion became a growing trend among a number of the Dominions and colonies.⁶⁰ This uncertainty may have contributed to a concern in sending out British citizens from overcrowded areas of the United Kingdom to populate other parts of

the Vital Question of Increasing the Population of New Zealand" p.1 in L 1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. National Archives.

⁵⁵ N.Z.P.D., 31 August 1939, p.700.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Deputation from the Five Million Club" p.3; Open Letter to the Prime Minister, 10 October 1938, p.2 in L1, 22/1/4. Dominions Settlement Association, 1936-55, National Archives; Deputation to the Prime Minister, 18 February 1938 in ibid.

⁵⁸ The conception of the foreign menace will be handled in more detail in chapter 8.

⁵⁹ Lochore, p.89. As early as March 1927 this fear was expressed by the Bishop of London on a visit to Wellington. See The Dominion, 2 March 1927.

⁶⁰ Constantine, The Making of British Colonial Development Policy, p.4.

empire. If too many foreigners were allowed access to New Zealand and given citizenship rights, then the British character of New Zealand might be changed or British workers might be disadvantaged.⁶¹ The period was one of defensiveness for the British Empire and also for the dominions. New Zealand was adjusting and asserting the boundaries of her dominion status by being actively involved in representative international bodies such as the League of Nations and setting her own foreign policy. It is foreseeable that the New Zealand Government was, in the thirties, sufficiently distracted with consolidating its economic standing and nationalist policies that the issue of accepting refugees was relevant only as regards the national control of immigration.

One may well ask why it was that any concession at all was made to immigration on the eve of war. The world situation was precarious to say the least, and New Zealand's own economic future was uncertain. It had been known in New Zealand government for several months that the outcome in Europe was potentially explosive.⁶² The explanation lies in pressure, not only from overseas but also on the domestic front where there was a demand that was becoming louder as time passed.

Pressure from without.

Increased international discussion in the 1930s of the injustices faced by refugees undoubtedly heightened awareness of a global need for assistance.⁶³ British governments took their role of governance over their mandates and dominions very seriously. New Zealand undoubtedly felt pressure from the British Government - as did Australia between 1936 and 1939 - to introduce a

⁶¹ See comments made by Bloodworth in N.Z.P.D. Vol. 242, 11 September 1935, p.229.

⁶² Sir Cecil Day to the Prime Minister, 21 April 1939 in AAEG 950 116a, item ref. 350/5/1. Foreign policy, general, 1925-39. National Archives.

⁶³ For reports of the activities of the Nansen Institute see A.J.H.R., A-5, 1922-38.

more generous quota for refugees in its alien immigration policies.⁶⁴ Britain's own policy with regard to refugees was believed to be based on the assumption that the admission of more than a small number would have adverse effects on the economy, particularly on unemployment, and interest groups worked to disprove this point.⁶⁵ However when the United States Government requested that an intergovernmental committee be formed to consider plans to assist political refugees, the British government became more insistent;

New Zealand have so far refused to be represented. . . It is proposed that a meeting with the High Commissioners should be held shortly for the purpose of explaining to them that the United Kingdom Government attach importance to the Evian Conference and would welcome the greatest possible measure of cooperation in connexion with it.⁶⁶

All Dominion governments eventually accepted the invitation to attend, but at the resulting Conference in July 1938, New Zealand followed Australia and Canada in stating that it was unable to increase its quota. This inflexibility was fully expected by the British Government, but some hope was held that New Zealand would eventually accept Jewish craftsmen, such as engineers, architects, draftsmen, musicians and scientists, as at this stage refugees were generally perceived to be Jews.⁶⁷ Ann Beaglehole argues that New Zealand was part of the collective failure of the Allied governments to act positively in aiding the victims of Nazi Germany.⁶⁸ Certainly New Zealand appears to have

⁶⁴ Ponton, p.108; Rutland, p.29.

⁶⁵ N. Angell, and D. F. Buxton, You and the Refugee. The Morals and Economics of the Problem, (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1939). This text, with its pro-refugee message, was possibly the best contemporary material available to New Zealand politicians, aside from formal discussions with the British government.

⁶⁶ Memo from the Foreign Office, 21 June 1938 in A. J. C. P.5425:716, M576/13. Emigration of political refugees from Europe to the United Kingdom, Dominions and the U.S.A.; Parliamentary questions.

⁶⁷ Memo from the Foreign Office on the Emigration of Political Refugees, 12 May 1938 in *ibid.*; Memorandum as to the attitude of the Dominions towards the proposals to be discussed at the International Conference at Evian, June 1938 in *Ibid.*; Memo from the Dominions Office on proposal by the Council for German Jewry in A. J. C. P.5421:705, M529/56. Settlement of Jews in the dominions in general and in specific countries.

⁶⁸ Beaglehole, p.1. For further reading see J. P. Fox "German and European Jewish refugees, 1933-1945: reflections on the Jewish condition under Hitler and the Western World's response to their expulsion and flight," in A. C. Bramwell (ed) Refugees in the Age of Total War, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp.69-85.

followed countries in the British Commonwealth of Nations in reacting sluggishly to calls for help from the European Jewish community.

In 1938 the Governor-General began to receive correspondence from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs advising that large numbers of refugees were already being admitted to the United Kingdom and that settlement of refugees in the colonies by colonial governments was being 'urgently considered'.⁶⁹ The question of settling refugees in the Dominions had first been discussed by His Majesty's government in 1933, but it was felt at that time that the economic circumstances were still unfavourable.⁷⁰ In an internal memo Mr Garnett at the British Foreign Office admitted in 1938 that the government would "not be sorry to see the Dominions open their doors a little wider to aliens of "assimilable types" always provided, of course, that this is accompanied by arrangements for securing as many United Kingdom settlers as they can absorb and are available".⁷¹ The implication of this dialogue seems to be a suggestion that New Zealand should follow suit. Dialogue between the Duke of Devonshire, of the Dominions Office in London, and W. J. Jordan, the New Zealand High Commissioner, over the matter of German "democratic" refugees from the Sudeten suggests a certain amount of pressure to toe the imperial line, even though on this occasion the New Zealand authorities stuck stubbornly to their official policy.⁷²

The acceptance of refugees in New Zealand was placed behind other

⁶⁹ Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Governor-General of New Zealand, 26 November 1938 in E. A. 1, 108/3/6 part 1. Treatment of Jews - Germany, 1933-53. National Archives.

⁷⁰ Memo from the House of Commons, 21 June 1938 in A. J. C. P. 5425:716, M576/13, Emigration of political refugees from Europe to the United Kingdom, Dominions and U.S.A.; Parliamentary questions.

⁷¹ Memo from Garnett, 12 May 1938, A. J. C. P. 5425:716, M576/21 in Emigration of political (Jewish and other) refugees from Austria and Germany to the United Kingdom and the colonies.

⁷² Correspondence dated 14 October 1938, 22 November 1938, in A. J. C. P. 5426:718, M582/66, Settlement of Sudeten German Democrat Refugees in the Dominions; Memorandum on meeting at the Dominions Office on the Problem of the Sudeten German refugees, 24 November 1938, A. J. C. P. 5426:718, M582/67. Settlement of Sudeten German Democrat Refugees in the Dominions.

groups. Imperial connections appear to have been at the forefront of concerns, as Bloodworth argued in August 1939;

The Honourable Mr McIntyre said that there are two million unemployed in Great Britain and that, if 20 percent of that number could be induced to come here, it would help to solve our problem. By all means let us get them; but we should bear in mind that if we create gaps in the population of Great Britain, then those gaps will be filled by refugees going to Great Britain instead of to the dominions. It ought to be our aim to increase the active population of the British Empire, and not necessarily to shift it from one part of the Empire to another.⁷³

Clearly, some needs had more priority than others. There was to be no change in policy; no immigrants but the British were to be encouraged.⁷⁴ New Zealand had a long-standing opposition to non-British immigration that would take time to change.

It may also be argued that it was in part the economic depression that led the government to restrict immigration. However, (as has been discussed in chapter 1), in 1938 this was no longer a valid justification, because there had been a return to relative prosperity.⁷⁵ While the New Zealand government's response to Jewish refugees was not so harsh, nor the numbers of refugees seeking succour so great, Irving Abella and Harold Troper note a similar but more sinister trend in Canada;

It is seductively easy to blame the democracies' dismal record on the Great Depression- easy but wrong. Obviously, in the midst of such a debilitating economic crisis the governments of both the United States and Canada saw little reason to allow in any job-hungry immigrants. But the economic situation cannot account for the obdurate rigidity that led authorities to reject plans to offer succour to Jews even after the outbreak of war locked the democracies and world Jewry together in the same anti-Nazi crusade.⁷⁶

There were various elements in the community who favoured a freeing up of immigration policy. An alternative view of the impact of immigration on employment was proposed in February 1938, when representatives of local

⁷³ N.Z.P.D., Vol. 255, August 31, 1939, p.700.

⁷⁴ *Tomorrow*, Vol. V, no. 6, p.169.

⁷⁵ Beaglehole, pp.8-9.

⁷⁶ I. Abella, and H. Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*, (New York, Random House, 1983) p.vii.

industries and community groups argued that a well thought out immigration policy could reduce unemployment by creating more consumers.⁷⁷ These people had a vested interest in encouraging immigration. This view was also to be brought forward in the legislature in 1939 by MP Edward Gordon who quoted extensively from the book *You and the Refugee*, a text supplied to MPs by the Refugees Emergency Committee (REC) in the hope of encouraging the government to adopt a more liberal policy towards the admission of refugees from Europe.⁷⁸ The REC was a non-partisan society whose representatives were drawn from agencies such as the Chambers of Commerce, the Y M C A (Young Men's Christian Association) and the Mothers Union, although it appears to have had close ties with the Jewish Refugee Committee in New Zealand.⁷⁹ Aside from being involved in the assistance of refugees arriving in the country, and providing guarantors for them, the Christchurch chapter, and its sister branches around the country, lobbied MPs and addressed various societies and churches. Correspondingly the increasing interest in the immigration of refugees taken by the Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington Chambers of Commerce in the months prior to Bloodworth's call for a commission, was noted by the British High Commissioner.⁸⁰ In Wellington, the Diocesan Chapter of the Anglican church passed a resolution requesting that the Government set up a Department of Immigration with a Board of Enquiry to consider the refugee problem as regards immigration.⁸¹ The work of the R E C within the community appears to have been cumulative.

F. A. Ponton has argued that fear of unemployment and Labour's aversion to the importation of labour were the causes of the government's restrictions on

⁷⁷ Deputation to the Prime Minister by the Dominion Settlement Association, 18 February 1938, p.18 in L1 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association, 1936-55, National Archives.

⁷⁸ N.Z.P.D., Vol. 255, August 17, 1939 pp.363-364; Refugees Emergency Committee, Christchurch, Minutes, 21 June 1939 and 1 September 1939.

⁷⁹ R E C, Christchurch, Minutes, 10 January 1939, 1 February 1939, 17 February 1939.

⁸⁰ Batterbee to Inskip, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 4 September, 1939 in A.J.C.P.5421:706, Settlement of Jews in the dominions in general and in specific countries.

⁸¹ Ibid.

immigration.⁸² Indeed, they were both issues which had a great deal of support within the nation. The depression had fostered nationalism, governmental restrictions, and a certain rigidity, but considering New Zealand's small population and burgeoning economy at this time and the ease with which refugees did find work on arrival in New Zealand, it seems possible to argue that this issue is more complex. What is also complex is the longevity of social bitterness that followed on from the economic depression. It is difficult to underestimate the long-term effects of economic difficulty on the lives of New Zealanders. For example, the trade union movement's fear of policies which could increase unemployment or contribute to the housing shortage were particularly relevant during the term of the first Labour government from 1936 onwards.

It appears likely that the popular pressure of the constituents to protect jobs for New Zealanders, and a fear of some of the problems surrounding the nature of refugees from Nazi Germany, may have played a part, although it is difficult to ascertain to what extent. It is possible that for this reason the High Commissioner for New Zealand, Mr Jordan admitted at a meeting of High Commissioners in June 1938 that New Zealand did not want Jewish black-coated workers but "might be able to accept some Jewish artisans."⁸³ It was common knowledge in the corridors of the Dominions Office at least, that from 1937 New Zealand had a shortage of skilled artisans.⁸⁴ Yet Walter Nash hinted at racial problems, in restricting the immigration of refugee business people, when he argued that:

anti-Semitism, never far from the surface, was very apt to emerge in the case of the talented race whose members can often beat us at our own game. . . .⁸⁵

⁸² Ponton, p.102.

⁸³ Notes from a Meeting of High Commissioners in the Secretary of State's Room, 28 June 1938 in A. J. C. P.5425:716, M576/44 . Emigration of political (Jewish and other) refugees from Austria and Germany to the U. K. and the colonies.

⁸⁴ Confidential Memo from Price to Besso (Ministry of Labour), Dominions Office, 15 July 1937, in A. J. C. P.5425: 716, in *ibid*.

⁸⁵ Cited in F. de la Mare, "The Refugee Problem", p.2, Nash 1311/0593, National Archives.

In fact this statement mirrored one made in July 1938 in an article in the *British Observer* which baldly stated that a further accreditation of perhaps 100,000 Jewish refugees would cause unavoidable anti-Semitic feeling.⁸⁶ The association between Jewishness and refugee status clearly concerned both the New Zealand and the British government. From 1935 to 1939 *The Press* reported on a regular basis on the persecution faced by Jews in Germany, and the fleeing of refugees from Germany.⁸⁷ This may have contributed to the conception that all German refugees are Jews, particularly if other papers printed the material with similar regularity. The New Zealand public appeared to closely follow the lead of Britain at this time and while they may have been enthusiastic about the practicality of British migrants, New Zealand's government was unwilling to officially acknowledge or deal with problems like anti-Semitism.⁸⁸ Comments made in New Zealand and in Britain tended to increase public misgivings, which suited the needs of policy, and in turn this was not conducive to moves towards lesser immigration controls. Whether this was a justifiable concern may be questioned. L. M. Goldman has noted that to his knowledge there was hardly any anti-Semitism in New Zealand until 1930, but he makes no comment of the situation after 1930.⁸⁹

Possibly, too, misgivings may have been fuelled by the perception of refugees as a potentially vocal addition to what was perceived as a largely homogeneous society. Refugees from Poland, particularly those from educated backgrounds were greatly concerned with "patriotism and national self-

Nash also observed that certain applications had to be refused because "an anti-Semitic viewpoint might be bred here." See Deputation from Five Million Club, p.6.

⁸⁶ *Observer*, 31 July 1938 cited in A. J. Sherman, *Island Refuge. Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich, 1933-1939*, (London, Paul Elek Ltd., 1973).p.124.

⁸⁷ For example, 28 October 1935, p.11; 29 October 1935, p.11; 9 November 1935, p.15; 7 July 1936, p.11; 11 July 1936 p.15; 6 August 1936 p.11; 15 January 1937, p.11; 24 July 1937, 15; 31 August 1937, p.11; 4 January 1938, p.4; 25 January 1938 p.9; 1 March 1938, p.9; 14 March 1938, p.9; 8 October 1938, p.17; 18 October 1938, p.9; 1 November 1938, p.12; 12 November 1938, p.15; 1 December 1938, p.13; 6 July 1939, p.8; 17 July 1939, p.13; 20 July 1939, p.15.

⁸⁸ See Nash's comments in "Deputation from the Five Million Club."

⁸⁹ Goldman, p.224.

identification" in the leadership of their community.⁹⁰

Until 1939, the New Zealand government was able to justify continued reluctance to increase immigration or to accept refugees outside the normal immigration procedures on the grounds of unemployment, lack of housing and the instability of the economy.⁹¹ The government's stand was noted by the editor of *the Press* in August 1938 who argued that the Prime Minister was merely trying to avoid saying that his government was politically frightened of immigration.⁹² Ironically it was in this very same issue that Mr Armstrong, the Minister of Employment proudly announced that unemployment was in fact "reduced to zero".⁹³ It was becoming evident that the government was avoiding the issue of refugees, preferring to consider the increasing number of applications as an immigration matter rather than a humanitarian issue. The failure to comprehend the nature of the problem was illustrated by finance Minister Walter Nash;

He (Nash) knew the difficulties in Germany at the present time but he considered that a lot of thought had to be given to the question of building the dominion, that was leaving out the humanitarian side. . . . he had discussed the matter in London with Mr Nathan and the others who had come to see him whilst he was there and they came to the conclusion that it would be harmful if permits were continued to be given. The second point was that the Jews had realised this themselves.⁹⁴

Within New Zealand, high prominent figures such as journalist A. E. Mander were themselves offering alternatives and suggestions to the government which promoted immigration, albeit the immigration of non-refugees.⁹⁵ Hardly any mention was made of non British, whether refugees or otherwise. *The Dominion* and *the Auckland Star* carried a number of stories

⁹⁰ I.H. Burnley, "The Poles," in Thomson and Trlin (eds) *Immigrants in New Zealand*, p.129.

⁹¹ Notes of interview between Dr. Harrop and H. T. Armstrong, Minister of Labour, in London, 20 July 1937 in L1 22/1/3. Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2, *National Archives*.

⁹² *The Press*, 5 August 1938, p.14.

⁹³ *Ibid.* p.16.

⁹⁴ "Deputation from the Five Million Club," p. 6

⁹⁵ A. E. Mander to Savage, 1 February 1937 in L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestion re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. *National Archives*.

between late 1936 and early 1937, highlighting reasons why New Zealand needed more people. In Christchurch *the Press* carried an ongoing discussion in its letters to the editor in late October 1935 on the falling birth-rate.⁹⁶ The issue was hinged on the matter of urgency; commentators agreed the problem was caused by a decline in the birth-rate, but were divided as to whether it should be solved immediately by increased immigration, or by encouraging people to have larger families. In a time of falling birth-rate the intended protection of the family was possibly enough to incite change, for as demographer Ian Pool argues, family demographic changes have been "among the prime determinants of social and economic policy issues".⁹⁷

However, some New Zealand industrialists began to consider other prospective immigrants. It was recognised in trade terms by the late thirties that New Zealand was facing a shrinking market in the United Kingdom, and at the same time there may have been concern in some areas to round off the economy and create a balance between the rural economy and industry.⁹⁸ It was generally accepted that an increase in wealth would depend on an increase in the standard of living within the dominion which depended on export values. One option was to try and increase the population in New Zealand so that the product was consumed in New Zealand alone,⁹⁹ and immigration could help fulfil this. While the Chambers of Commerce focused on migration within the Empire, another group, the Five Million Club which was led by the Speaker of the House of Representatives W. E. Barnard, wanted to place a small party of "German people" in positions as domestics and farm labourers.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ *The Press*, 22-24 October 1935.

⁹⁷ I. Pool, 'The Demographic Transition of the New Zealand Family: A Key Determinant of Major Policy Needs and Responses' in B. Niculescu (ed) *Population Change and Social and Economic Policy in the 1990s*, (Wellington), 1991.

⁹⁸ Memo to the President of the Five Million Club, 20 January 1939, p.2, in L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestion re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. *National Archives*; Deputation from Five Million Club, in *ibid*.

⁹⁹ Deputation to the Prime Minister.

¹⁰⁰ Deputation from Five Million Club, p.4 ; Report from The Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire, 23 September 1936, in L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestion re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. *National Archives*. Of the 35 people under

They would conceivably be "productive consumers."¹⁰¹ Although there is no official acknowledgement of the desperation of the international situation, there seems to have been a conception of these potential "immigrants" from Europe as being individuals who would gladly go where New Zealand's British permanent residents would not, in return for being offered a new life in New Zealand. Indeed, those groups and individuals who promoted the freeing up of refugee policy highlighted the work skills of the prospective migrants.¹⁰²

The argument of the Five Million Club had a somewhat paternalistic tone:

They (the Five Million Club) felt with a small contingent (of migrating refugees) like the one suggested there were two points to be watched. It would first of all be necessary to supervise the welfare of the immigrants for a time at least because foreign immigrants had a claim in that respect and were more liable to exploitation than others, and secondly they felt that as far as possible if they could locate a number in one district where they would have an opportunity of meeting from time to time it would be a help to them in making them more contented and comfortable.¹⁰³

These "German peoples" would be solely and comprehensively supported by the Five Million Club, but the Minister of Immigration was still reluctant to grant them permits.¹⁰⁴ Nash cited three main reasons. He was concerned as to the "immigrants" impact on unemployment, as to their being Jewish, and he was unwilling to make a commitment to assisting the crisis, if Britain had not also agreed to help.¹⁰⁵ It seems that the government was uncertain as to their economic benefit, seeing the disadvantage of, for example, their possible impact on unemployment. The humanitarian issue was not yet of pressing interest.

On at least one occasion, however, the New Zealand Government did grant permission for the admission of ten skilled Austrian refugees and their families, people who were trade unionists and "preferably Socialists who had suffered

consideration, the deputation noted that fourteen were "pure Germans", 8 were "pure Jews" and thirteen "had Jewish blood but were not entirely Jews".

¹⁰¹ Deputation from Five Million, p.4.

¹⁰² *Tomorrow*, Vol. V, no. 6, 18 January 1938, p.170.

¹⁰³ Deputation from the Five Million Club, p.2.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Later, in May 1939, Mr Castles of the Five Million Club offered his association's support to the R E C. See R E C Minutes, 19 June 1939.

¹⁰⁵ Deputation from Five Million Club pp.6-7.

persecution at the hands of the Nazi Government."¹⁰⁶ In fact, the permits were declined as the operatives in question preferred to immigrate with compatriots under a Canadian scheme. However, if these particular building operatives had proved "to be of a satisfactory type", then it was thought that another small number might be admitted. This particular decision was given the approval of the National Executive of the Federation of Labour, whose report stated that the Executive realised the plight of refugees from Austria and Germany who were seeking refuge in New Zealand. But because they were protecting the interests of the members of the New Zealand Federation, they could not assist those who were not suitable to the country's requirements.¹⁰⁷

There is some evidence that people in the professions as well as the trades saw the refugees as a threat to employment security. Some difficulty arose when the professional bodies established under law to represent doctors and dentists refused to accept professional qualifications obtained outside New Zealand and other parts of the Empire for purposes of registration. Goldman records two incidents. In one, the Auckland division of the British Medical Association announced that it would take protective action against an influx of Jewish doctors.¹⁰⁸ In effect the New Zealand Medical Council was allowed the right to refuse the registration of refugee doctors in a situation where the New Zealand government could have readily intervened. Similarly, the New Zealand Dental Association followed Medical Council policy and asked the government to stop the entry of "non Aryans (dentists) from Germany". Arguably, the justification of New Zealand standards and the protection of the Association's interests are understandable if not particularly honourable.¹⁰⁹ However a further defence raised by historian Tom Brooking in the

¹⁰⁶ Batterbee, Governor-General in New Zealand to Inskip, 4 May 1939, in A. J. C. P., 5421:706, M529/112, Settlement of Jews in the dominions in general and in specific countries.

¹⁰⁷ Batterbee to Inskip, 4 May 1939, in A. J. C. P. 5416:694, M326/1-54. New Zealand migration policy: general.

¹⁰⁸ Goldman, p.226.

¹⁰⁹ T. W. H. Brooking, *A History of Dentistry in New Zealand*, (Dunedin, New Zealand Dental Association, 1980), p.140.

Association's history appears questionable. Brooking maintains that in 1937, New Zealand dentists "had little inkling as to why Jewish dentists had fled Nazi Europe."¹¹⁰ Ann Beaglehole argues that ignorance of the situation was not atypical.¹¹¹ Given the availability and frequency of newspaper reports outlining the Jewish dilemma at the time, this claim seems weak, if not totally unlikely. Medical professionals were concerned primarily, it seems, in creating a scarcity value for their services, rather than accommodating newcomers, when in fact their professional bodies were legally authorised to recognise any foreign degree if they considered it to be of equal standing with the New Zealand qualification.¹¹² Arguably, personal interests were paramount, for it seems that for at least one immigrant dentist the transition to a small Hamilton practise was relatively smooth;

he got a very good nurse who told him how to go about these things, and being a curiosity he got quite a lot of patients in a very short time because he had his doctorate of Dental Surgery and he had a very good manner, particularly with kids,... got on particularly well with Maoris, I presume because English didn't matter so much at that time. And he became... Princess Te Puia was one of his early patients so he got a whole Maori clientele - hardly ever charged them because he thought that they were poor people.¹¹³

In the United States, observers have noted the resentment felt by those blocked from 'freedom and opportunity' by recently arrived migrants who were fast-tracked to full and total membership in their new society.¹¹⁴ While in the example above, there was no animosity amongst the tangata whenua because there was no economic competition, chapter eight will consider an example where the employment activities of a migrant minority are considered

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹ Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay*, p.13.

¹¹² Communication from the delegation of New Zealand to the Chairman of the Technical Subcommittee, C.I.E./C.T./12, Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, July 1938, in A.J.C.P.5425: 717, M576/61-250. Emigration of political (Jewish and other) refugees from Austria and Germany to the U. K. and the colonies.

¹¹³ Interview with Ralf Unger by J. Malcolm, 27 June 1995. Recording in the author's collection.

¹¹⁴ L. H. Fuchs, "The Reaction of Black Americans to Immigration", in V. Yans-McLaughlin (ed) *Immigration Reconsidered. History, sociology, and politics*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990).

to be to the detriment of Maori interests.

Other groups aside from the REC, were involved in the lobbying of the Government. In 1938 the Twelfth Annual Conference of the Dominion Council of the League of Nations Union moved to press the Government for a relaxation in the existing requirements for financial guarantees, a step which would have been considered more humane.¹¹⁵ Similarly, a "Central Provincial Council on Social Problems" attempted to bring the "urgent need" of European refugees to the attention of the various churches in the hope that this would lead the Government to create a "more liberal immigration policy".¹¹⁶ The Communist Party of New Zealand when reacting to news of the atrocities being done to the Jewish people called upon the government to lodge a strong protest to the German government through 'the usual diplomatic channels'.¹¹⁷ In this instance, mention was made of the government's restrictive immigration policy that was keeping these people out. At the forefront of public calls for the acceptance of refugees, particularly Jewish refugees, were groups like the Jewish congregation in Auckland and members of the University Lodge.¹¹⁸ The Auckland Jewish community in particular worked steadily from 1936 to place refugees from Germany.¹¹⁹ Under the name Jewish Welfare Society, it and its associate groups in the main centres, looked after arriving refugees.

Still, the New Zealand Jewish community appears to have been strangely powerless in this issue. Ann Beaglehole argues that New Zealand Jews felt a strong sense of obligation to help the refugees, but they were overwhelmed by the prevailing philosophy of ethnic inconspicuousness, and were concerned that anti-Semitism might be provoked or brought to the surface.¹²⁰ While

¹¹⁵ Resolution cited in Goldman, p.226.

¹¹⁶ See R E C Minutes, 31 March 1939.

¹¹⁷ C. M. Brooks, Communist Party of New Zealand, to Savage, November 1938 in E.A. 1, 108/3/6 part 1. Treatment of Jews - Germany, 1933-53, National Archives.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Ralf Unger, by J. Malcolm, 27 June 1995.

¹¹⁹ Professor N. Bentwich, Council for German Jewry, to Batterbee, Dominions Office, 14 December 1938 in A. J. C. P. 5421:705, M529/56, Settlement of Jews in the dominions in general and in specific countries.

¹²⁰ A. Beaglehole, Facing the Past. Looking Back at Refugee Childhood in New Zealand, 1940s-

various Jewish Welcome Committees around the country received and helped newcomers they were unable to influence the government's decision to undertake restrictive measures.¹²¹ This occurrence appears to have been mirrored elsewhere in the Empire. In Canada the Jewish community found itself powerless to resist anti-Semitic restrictions, while the Australian Jews were assimilated to the extent that they did not want European Jews to jeopardise their position in Australia.¹²² The non welcoming attitude is arguably not unique to Australia, for the Jewish community in America reacted similarly because of fear of an anti-Semitic backlash,¹²³ a matter of which the New Zealand government was well aware. In the New Zealand Jewish community's defence, their small size would have contributed to its impotence.

With regard to peoples who were not of British origin, New Zealand society in general was very selective, expecting and exacting a number of conditions, and holding a number of pre-existing beliefs. One such concern was commonly vocalised with Asian migration, that those who were not British came to work in New Zealand only to one day return home taking all their accumulated wealth with them.¹²⁴ Such an argument was a useful economic justification to restrict immigration. Furthermore, whether or not it was appreciated in New Zealand that the refugee problem was not entirely Jewish is uncertain. In New Zealand's own experience of Jewish people this had not happened; New Zealand Jews had gone to the first war in Europe, and returned. They were also politicians and prominent members of the New Zealand community.¹²⁵ Another deep-seated concern related to a perception of refugees and other "aliens" as untrustworthy. As discussed previously, the

1960s, (Wellington, Allen and Unwin, 1990), p.23.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.213.

¹²² Abella, and Troper; Rutland, p.37.

¹²³ Telegram from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Batterbee, 26 November 1938, in EA 1 108/3/6 part 1. Treatment of Jews - Germany, 1933-53, National Archives.

¹²⁴ This view in relation to refugees can be seen in "An Englishman's View.." in National Archives L1 22/1/3. Bundle 224. Suggestion re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. National Archives. For discussion relating to Asian migration, see chapter 8.

¹²⁵ Goldman, pp.216-223.

move towards war in Europe prompted representatives of the government and the military to discuss and to make plans on how to prevent disloyalty amongst the country's alien population.¹²⁶ What lay then behind this concern?

New Zealand citizens possessed a deep suspicion of those who stood out, a suspicion which was undoubtedly rooted in long-standing socially-constructed perceptions of immigration and limited personal experience of migrants. Migrants such as refugees, who were not of British origin, tended to be regarded as 'foreigners'; people who were different not only in their lack of citizenship, but also because of their attitudes, behaviour, beliefs, values and language. Frequently they were associated with over-assertive behaviour, making challenges to established practises, and as having a tendency to compete for valued resources.¹²⁷ Foreigners were perceived as arriving in hordes so as to overwhelm the British New Zealanders. While legislatively, their restricted entry could be justified in time of war, the speed with which the subject was again raised in the late 1930s suggests an on-going uncertainty felt by legislators during peace-time. Officialdom was specific in its requirements of "suitable refugees";

The types wanted were those who did not tend to segregate themselves, and would fit into the economic life of the country.¹²⁸

The overwhelming impression that newcomers received was that while anti-Semitism was not common, cultural differences were not celebrated by the New Zealanders with whom they came into contact.¹²⁹ Australians had a similar distrust. There, new Jewish immigrants were met on arrival by an

¹²⁶ Meetings of Aliens Committee, and Emergency Precautions Committee, 12 July 1937 in EA 1 89/2 Part 1 Minutes of the Aliens Committee :subject:- enemy prisoners of war, aliens and internees, National Archives. A report discussing the treatment of aliens in the case of war was also discussed by the Military Forces head in 1936. See EA 1 89/2/4 Part 1. Regulations for the control of Aliens, National Archives.

¹²⁷ A. D. Trlin, "The Social Effects of Immigration" in Niculescu p.99.

¹²⁸ Batterbee to Inskip, 4 September 1939, in A. J. C. P.5421:706, M529/61-139, Settlement of Jews in the dominions in general and in specific countries.

¹²⁹ A. Beaglehole, "Facing the Past. Looking Back at Refugee Childhood in New Zealand," Ph.D (History) Victoria University of Wellington, 1990.

official of the Jewish welfare society who told them how to behave inconspicuously and urged them to become naturalised as soon as possible.¹³⁰ Refugees who came to a new society had survived a tumultuous period, often losing family members, experiencing difficult journeys and surviving detention and wars. They wanted the stability the new home could provide, but they required an adjustment period. Unsurprisingly it was found in a 1994 study, that refugees suffered significantly more clinical depression than any other migrant group.¹³¹

The New Zealand government and New Zealand citizens desired immigrants who were easily assimilable, who spoke and looked like British New Zealanders and who, at the very least worked hard to blend in.¹³² In this assumption, there was no belief that New Zealanders themselves should adapt to the newcomers, nor was there any recognition of a possible cultural contribution to New Zealand society. Satisfactory surveys and research into attitudes towards immigrants have only become available in the post World War II era. While they are not necessarily relevant, they can, however, pinpoint areas of interest. A 1952 study showed that some racial and ethnic groups, particularly those with a close extended family structure, tended to resist assimilation and in this way they found it impossible to become accepted into New Zealand society. These small sub-cultural groups were of such comparative rarity as to draw attention to themselves, and cause British New Zealand citizens to assume generalisation of people of their nationality.¹³³ Because New Zealand society was in international terms less pluralistic than others, most institutions were oriented towards the ideals and practises of the "white" Anglo Saxon. Therefore the status of the individual depended largely

¹³⁰ Rutland, p.38.

¹³¹ R. Pernice and J. Brook, "Relationship of Migrant Status (Refugee or Immigrant) to Mental Health, The International Journal of Social Psychiatry (1994) Vol. 40 (3), p.185.

¹³² An Englishman's View.. p.2 in L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. National Archives; N.Z.P.D., Vol. 254, 6 July 1939, p.187.

¹³³ J. R. McCreary, The Modification of International Attitudes: A New Zealand Study, Publications in Psychology, No.2 (Wellington, Victoria University College, 1952), p.3.

on compliance with the prescribed ideals.¹³⁴ The possibility of New Zealanders themselves adapting to these new groups and cultures was not entertained, except by a small minority.¹³⁵ Many refugees were aware of this prerequisite to acceptance, and endeavoured to blend in. Recent arrival Herbert Roth recalled being reprimanded by Jack Meltzer, the President of the Jewish Welfare Society in Wellington, for having said he was a Socialist in a press interview;

He said "It creates a bad impression, people don't want socialists in this country, and we want our people to keep their heads down and not to make public statements and interfere."¹³⁶

Undeniably, among public leaders and the general population there was a preference for young able-bodied British people.¹³⁷ There was lurking here a ranking system of racial and ethnic types. Like the Canadians,¹³⁸ concerned New Zealand citizens who were themselves British subjects advocated a list of nationalities whom they believed possessed the most desirable characteristics for prospective immigrants. At the top were the British, followed by northern Europeans such as the Scandinavians, and then central Europeans.¹³⁹ Jews were not held to be of the right character. As W. H. McIntyre put it

Our hearts go out to them on account of the great hardship and suffering many of them are undergoing at present, but I doubt very much the advisability of this country adopting a wholesale immigration of that class of people.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ Sir Guy Powles, Race Relations Conciliator, 1973, in M. Abbott, Refugee Resettlement and Well-being, (Wellington, National Conference on Refugee Mental Health in New Zealand, 1989), p.5.

¹³⁵ Beaglehole, A Small Price to Pay, p.13; Tomorrow, Vol. IV, no. 6, 19 January 1938, pp.166-168.

¹³⁶ Interview with Bert Roth, by D. Crosado, 26 May 1985. Oral History Centre.

¹³⁷ Interview between Dr. Harrop and H. T. Armstrong, Minister of Labour, at London, 20 July 1937, in L1 22/1/3, Bundle 224, Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2. National Archives.

¹³⁸ Abella and Troper, p.5.

¹³⁹ Deputation to the Prime Minister, p.4; McCreary's 1952 survey of 1,000 New Zealand residents shows that the favoured prospective citizens were of British, Australian and American descent with an average of around 97%. Jews by comparison scored only 69.4%. See McCreary p.4.

¹⁴⁰ N.Z.P.D., Vol. 255, W. H. McIntyre on 25 August 1939, p.595.

In retrospect, the twentieth century has been marked by a number of different refugee movements around the globe which for the first time impacted upon New Zealand. The specific case in the thirties of the large number of refugees from Nazi Germany, and the existence of international policies on treatment of refugees, placed pressure on the dominions to become involved.

The very size of New Zealand society masked the issue at hand. Issues of small, rejuvenating markets and unemployment served to justify the paltry numbers of permits granted. Those who did succeed were small in number and difficult to identify because of their very ability to secure the relevant permits under existing immigration procedures. The government's refusal to include a "refugee" class within its immigration policy, to consider group migration or the adoption of a quota system, can be viewed as a refusal to adjust the immigration policy to changing conditions. However, in this instance, pressure from abroad was impossible to ignore.

The desperation of the refugee's plight and the humanitarian nature of their needs were weighted against issues of New Zealand's interests. New Zealand needed more people, for defensive and economic reasons, but because of the suspicion surrounding foreigners as "friendly" or "enemy", explicit types of people were required. They needed to be easily assimilable and as problem-free as possible. New Zealand's power structure was particularly British and very concerned about remaining that way, so non-British, and potentially non-Christian peoples were a threat to the status quo. Indeed, its interests had always been focused around the encouragement of British immigration. Most of the interwar period, except for a relaxation between 1923 and 1931, is marked by restrictive legislative measures upon the entry of non-British, particularly specific nationality groups. One particular Act, the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931 gave the Government the power to prohibit individuals as it saw fit, until 1936. Its surreptitious granting of

permits indicated a willingness to not only avoid antagonism and conflict, but also the attentions of those who wanted a more liberal policy.¹⁴¹

At the same time there was an attempt to be all things to all people. The New Zealand government in its League of Nations capacity, supported the Nansen Office but was aware of its limitations. While it acknowledged the desire of Britain for New Zealand to extend its policy on refugees it conceded little at the international level. The uniquely pro British immigration policy gave New Zealand the upper hand on this issue. It would have been difficult for Britain to criticise the policy when it worked to its own advantage, as regards the acceptance of British workers to other parts of the Empire. New Zealand's international obligations, pressure from Britain to accept more refugees and calls from some New Zealanders warranted an insistence by the government that as much was being done as possible to help refugees. On the other hand it was also telling its restrictionist audience that their demands were valid too. Working class and professional groups had a number of different reasons for wanting restrictions continued, among them protection of the professions, and the existence of a kind of siege mentality created by the economic depression. Because of the depression experience, the powerful fear of unemployment, support for restriction from the community, and a concern about importing "old world" problems, the government was able to justify the stalling of changes to immigration policy regarding aliens. In this sense the special case of refugee immigration was never acknowledged, and the potential economic and cultural benefits that the refugees might bring was barely recognised.¹⁴² This restrictiveness was by no means particular to New Zealand; Britain's domestic policy was similarly restrictive except in the case of Jewish refugees, and Australia and Canada were also unwilling to concede little more than a concern for the welfare of those facing persecution in Europe.

¹⁴¹ Beaglehole, "A Small Price to Pay", p.35.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, p.34.

In fact, is arguable whether the government regarded the refugee problem as a serious immigration issue for New Zealand. The treatment of the refugee question; that is the lack of any real policy before 1944, the absence of a quota system, and inaction over discriminatory measures adopted by the professions indicate the government's unwillingness to regard the problem as anything rather than a temporary crisis before the outbreak of war. While in principle the government followed League policy, and bowed to Empire pressure, it considered the matter to be an aspect of external relations and thus undeserving of domestic consideration. In some instances the lack of policy on the refugee question meant that people for whom work was guaranteed may not have been admitted while others were.¹⁴³ Temporary measures are rarely satisfactory.

¹⁴³ Comments of the Christchurch Branch of the R. E. C. in H. E. Batterbee, to T. Inskip, 12 July 1939, in A. J. C. P.5421:706, M529/61-139, Settlement of the Jews in the Dominions.

Chapter eight: Asian migrants and post-World War I White New Zealand.

The treatment of Asian peoples in the European Western world has been characterised by what Edward Said calls Orientalism; that is, the conception of the Orient based upon its place within European experience.¹ The study is problematic, least of all because the terms of description, for example "East" and "West", and "Asian" and "European" are value-laden expressions. The use of non-specific language is troubling in that it inevitably places one readily definable group against another in a manner which may not be entirely natural. Europeans, for example, are not a unified group. Said sees this problem of national groupings as being artificially imposed, and as potentially an explosive issue.² Yet he and many other students of Orientalism continue to use the terms because they are relevant as "communities of interpretation".³

While historically the Orient has been one of the world's oldest and richest areas of population it has also been Europe's cultural contestant, and the source of its "deepest and most recurring images of the Other". For this reason, studies of Asia and Asians are helpful in that they contribute to the understanding of Europe and Europeans.⁴ The classification of peoples is an objectifying process. But at the same time it also serves to strengthen group identification, because the very act of distinguishing "the Other" is a de-humanising process complete with its own racial discourse.⁵ Historically the physical and cultural differences of "coloured" peoples has marked them for special treatment in other British Empire countries. In South Africa the

¹ E. Said, Orientalism, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

² *Ibid.*, p.45

³ E. Said, "Orientalism reconsidered", in F. Barker et al. Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-84, (London, Methuen, 1986), p.214.

⁴ *Ibid.* p.1.

⁵ P. M. Rosenau, Post-modernism and the Social Sciences. Insights, Inroads and Intrusions, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992), p.50; Bauman, Z. Modernity and Ambivalence, (Oxford, Polity Press, 1991), pp.46-48.

dominant white settler society used theories of biological racial inferiority to defend racial segregation.⁶ Similarly New Zealand used the term "race aliens" to describe Pacific-dwelling and other peoples with origins other than the "European race". Maori fit into this definition but the smug overtones of "civilised" and "uncivilised" did not go unnoticed by the Maori people. As Taare Te Toki expressed in a letter to the editor of *the Press* in 1937;

... it seems that no matter how accomplished persons of a coloured race may be, there are persons who call themselves civilised who would treat them with the utmost contempt, proving that it is often the white who is most ignorant and narrow-minded.⁷

Contemporary eugenicist thinking assumed Maori to be dependents in the natural order and this is reflected in the dominant role that Pakeha cultural and social theory played within New Zealand society. Contemporaries like Dr Alfred Newman based studies of demography on assumptions of Caucasian racial superiority, and the "decay" of the Maori "race".⁸ Yet Maori doctor Peter Buck campaigned to improve the health and sanitation of his people, and became interested in anthropology, establishing himself as the leading figure in Maori material culture.⁹ Similarly, Maori politician Apirana Ngata initiated studies of Maori social and cultural practises, and used his knowledge and acceptance in the Pakeha world to assist his people and preserve their identity.¹⁰

Social Darwinism provided an intellectual framework and justification for conceptions of the New Zealand nation. It also furnished a definition of who should become part of it and on what terms. Asian immigration, which will be discussed in this chapter, has to be located in its interaction with the people of the Pacific. Contemporary racial theory linked explicitly New Zealand Maori

⁶ For discussion on South Africa, see P. Rich, *White Power and the Liberal Conscience. Racial segregation and South African Liberalism 1921-60*, Manchester, 1984.

⁷ *The Press*, 4 November 1937, p.15.

⁸ J. Stenhouse, "Newman, Alfred," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 1901-1920*, Vol. III, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1996), pp.358-59.

⁹ M. P. K. Sorrenson, "Buck, Peter", in *ibid.*, pp.72-74.

¹⁰ M. P. K. Sorrenson, "Ngata, Apirana", in *ibid.*, pp.359-363.

and Pacific island populations, and that perspective needs to be recaptured. This chapter looks therefore, at the interaction of Maori and Asian in New Zealand and the Asian presence in the Pacific as affecting immigration issues. It focuses on Indians and Chinese because of all the Asian peoples it was the Chinese and the Indian communities in New Zealand who were subjected to public antipathy and discriminatory legislation.¹¹ This occurred, arguably because Chinese and Indians, of all migrant ethnic minority groups in New Zealand, have distinctive physical and cultural traits, as compared to the Lebanese who are physically and culturally similar to Europeans.¹²

In the post World War One era a racial language of migration was apparent. Asian immigration raised issues which included but stretched beyond labour supply. In particular, it had implications for New Zealand's internal "race relations". Concern for "racial purity" joined a desire to protect the jobs of ex-servicemen in post-war economic hard times to give a particular edge to this debate. The implication of the racial ideology, with its emphasis on the reproduction of "Anglo-Saxon stock," heightened the concern about gender issues and their connection to race. These matters were customarily discussed in the context of "whites" and "non-whites".

New Zealand's distinctiveness was exemplified by a case concerning the work of Maori women working in market gardens owned by Asian men. In July 1929 Sir Apirana Ngata reported on a health survey of the situation of Maori on market gardens, in which particular concern was voiced about contact between Maori girls and "Asiatics".¹³ Interest appears to have been

¹¹ S. Rachagan, "Asian Immigration to New Zealand. A Study of Attitudes and Legislation," M. A. (Geography), University of Otago, 1972. p.20. For the purposes of this chapter some reference may be made to regional Indian ethnic groups, for example Gujaratis, Punjabis and Lascars.

¹² According to the 1926 and 1936 census the 'Assyrians' were also a relatively large immigrant element in New Zealand. However this has been largely discounted as physical and occupational stereotype, for the term describes not only the small number of Lebanese who entered the country at this time but also the Indian hawkers who had begun to appear on New Zealand road sides.

¹³ N.Z.P.D., Vol. 221, July 18 1929, p.487.

aroused in some Northern papers with the implication being that Maori were being taken advantage of by Chinese and Indians, although the Christchurch dailies do not appear to have been overly concerned by the issue.¹⁴

The outcry of the Te Akarana Maori Association in particular caused a great deal of comment. While living conditions and hours of work on Asian market gardens were of concern, the Association was particularly disturbed by what it saw as a "growing association between "men from the East" and Maori women," and it wrote to the Minister of Labour.¹⁵ "Andrew" Ngawaka, leader of Te Rarawa, reported his abhorrence of miscegenation in the *Auckland Sun*, stating that the people of New Zealand and their government were negligent for letting these conditions exist.¹⁶ In July 1929, the National Council of Women joined an alliance of support with the Te Akarana Maori Association, the White New Zealand League, North Auckland Chieftains, the Treaty of Waitangi Maori Welfare League and the Maniopototo Maori Council, to encourage a parliamentary response.¹⁷ With the exception of the White New Zealand League which was an anti-Asian lobby group, these organisations represented Maori concerns.

Eventually concern culminated with the establishment of a committee on order of the Minister of Native Affairs, Apirana Ngata, to inquire and report on numbers, issues and circumstances of Maori employment and female habitation on market gardens in the Auckland area, Pukekohe, Otaki, Foxton and Wanganui; the focus of the original health survey.¹⁸ The report found that Maori were not employed by Asian market gardeners to any large extent or on

¹⁴ "Employed by Chinese", *The Auckland Weekly News*, 24 July 1929. Of Canterbury papers, only the Lyttelton Times even reports the initial account.

¹⁵ Sedgewick, C. P. "The Politics of Survival: A Social History of the Chinese in New Zealand," Ph. D (Sociology), University of Canterbury, 1982, pp.354-5. For more details on Ngawaka's life, see M. Henare, "Ngawaka, Anaru" C Orange, (Gen. ed.) *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. III, 1901-1920, pp.364-5.

¹⁶ Sedgewick, p.355.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 2 September 1929. See "Report of Committee on Employment of Maori on Market Gardens," *A. J. H. R.*, 1929, G-11.

a permanent basis. For example there were only eleven Maori employed in Auckland central, of whom only seven were women. This did not, it seems, indicate a lack of evidence but rather the deviousness of the Chinese and the Indians;

The Committee realizes that, owing to the amount of publicity that had been given this matter in the press through the Akarana Association and other persons, it is probable that either the Chinese had reduced the number of their employees or that the Maoris had left their employment temporarily. Another factor that has to be taken into account is the fact that the Committee's inquiries were made during the off-season, when additional labour could have been dispensed with very little inconvenience.¹⁹

The report also found that because there was a tendency to give a contract to the head of a household, Maori would bring whanau members to voluntarily assist with work, which would explain large numbers of Maori on individual market gardens. In fact Maori preferred to be employed by Chinese and Indians because the growers gave financial advances on future earnings as well as financial and physical assistance in the off-season.²⁰ In general terms it was difficult to report on rates of pay because of the difference in localities and crops. But the committee members found that accommodation where provided, was unfit for human occupation. On the matter of the moral corruption of Maori women, evidence was limited to individual cases as the Government statistician, the Registrar-General and the Commissioner of Police were unable to supply information, but in the report members felt constrained to state that;

during the course of the inquiry evidence was submitted to show that intercourse between white girls of a certain type and the Chinese on market gardens was fairly prevalent, and the indications were that overtures did not in every case emanate from the Chinese, but that both the white girls and the Maori girls were much to blame.²¹

The Committee recommended that it was in the interests of public morality that the employment of Maori girls by Chinese and "Hindus" should

¹⁹ Ibid., p.2

²⁰ Ibid., p.3.

²¹ Ibid., p.4.

not be allowed to take place. But for economic reasons there could not be a prohibition on their employment on market gardens. Despite this, a number of restrictive conditions, such as age restrictions, accommodation regulations and the fixing of a minimum wage were placed on the industry and its use of Maori people as labour. Furthermore, while concerns for the welfare of individuals may have been real, final warnings were given not only regarding a possible reduction in the standard of living but also in terms of eugenic considerations;

The indiscriminate intermingling of the lower types of the races - i.e. Maoris, Chinese, and Hindus - will, in the opinion of the Committee, have an effect that must eventually cause deterioration not only in the family and national life of the Maori race, but also in the national life of this country, by the introduction of a hybrid race, the successful absorption of which is problematical. There is also the very real danger that in so far as the offspring of Chinese fathers are concerned such miscegenation may eventually result in the submergence of the Maori race similar to what has occurred in Hawaii.²²

The report raises a number of issues about conceptions of Asians and Asian immigrants in New Zealand, not the least of which are economic factors. In this instance a minor parliamentary report raised a national dispute (and a Committee of Enquiry) from an issue which had no real fabric, but a firm grip on the issue of colour. While a particularly high profile example, the report itself was not isolated in expressing a concern for inter-racial sexual relations. In her study of perceptions of New Zealand Chinese, Penelope Law found twenty-eight instances of "immoral" behaviour by Chinese reported in the tabloid newspaper the *New Zealand Truth* in the 1930s and 1940s.²³

Sex can be very strongly linked to racism. Ronald Hyam argues that among the white colonisers there was a very strong animosity towards "non-white" men and the erotic competition they posed.²⁴ The incidence of sexuality in the colonial environment could be influenced by factors like the availability of partners, which was a very real concern in early twentieth century New

²² Ibid, p.5

²³ P. Law, "'Too much 'yellow' in the melting pot?'; Perceptions of the New Zealand Chinese 1930-1960", B.A. Hons., Thesis, University of Otago, 1994, p.15.

²⁴ R. Hyam, *Empire and sexuality. The British experience*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990), pp.204-206.

Zealand. It is unsurprising then that the "white" woman, the ultimate tool of white imperialism, should be closely guarded to prevent inter-racial sexual intercourse, and by so doing, protect the purity of the "white" race. For while a "white" man in a similar situation would only be demeaned by sexual contact with "non-white" women, it was believed that "white" women would be defiled by sexual contact with "non-white" men.²⁵ Interracial sexual relations were not to be encouraged. In one incident a young woman who had herself recently immigrated from Britain, was banished from her family when she married a Chinese-born Wellington resident.²⁶

Most specifically this report shows a concern for the sexuality of Asian men in a largely unexploited "white" territory. To the Eurocentric and ethnocentric white colonists the Maori appeared as childlike and in need of protection and the Asian was cast in the role of predator. To a certain extent Maori internalised this contemporary racial theory, but one can almost feel the frustration of Ngata in his resignation from cabinet after allegations of corruption; the move was perceived as being a Pakeha attempt to undermine the success of his land schemes.²⁷ To support this guidance of the Maori and to promote the ideology of "one people", the Maori people were constrained by "the forces of capitalism", becoming part of the seasonal and labouring workforce with superficial contact with "white" British subjects.²⁸ The effect was one of Maori subjugation in the matter of their own treatment, let alone the treatment of others. There were also concerns that the problems of Hawaii would occur in Samoa. In 1921 legislation was passed which prohibited the right of any Chinese male under contract for manual or domestic service or introduced for any public scheme to produce Chinese labourers, from marrying

²⁵ A. Inglis, *'Not a White Woman Safe.' Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby 1920-1934*, (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1974), pp.22-23.

²⁶ J. Cozens to J. Malcolm, 18 June 1995. Copy in author's collection.

²⁷ Sorrenson, "Ngata", p.362.

²⁸ R. Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou. Struggle Without End*, (Auckland, Penguin Books, 1990), p.186.

any Samoan woman.²⁹ Clearly there were fears for the innocence of the Samoan race from the sexual urges of Chinese labourers.

Amirah Inglis, in her book about the passage of the White Women's Protection Ordinance (1926) in Papua New Guinea, comments on the predominance in "white"-dominated societies of the deep-seated association in European cultures of blackness and evil.³⁰ While non-procreative forms of sexual behaviour like homosexuality were discouraged in New Zealand's official moral standards, the conduct was tolerated in China by imperial law, and by public opinion.³¹ However while it was acceptable behaviour to Chinese men in New Zealand, the heterosexual public viewed it as evidence of perversion. The separation of racial groups was strongly adhered to on the matter of sexuality, where "white" Europeans equated those who were not of the same racial groups, with the status of urge-driven animals.³²

In retrospect the 1929 report was based not on firm evidence but on the feeding of existing prejudices, and appeared to support the argument for racial purity rather than a trend for swelling numbers of Asians in the market gardening industry, foreigners in "our midst". While 37,103 immigrants entered New Zealand in the five years to 1926,³³ only 2,030 Chinese and 628 Indians entered at the same time.³⁴ In actual fact when the excess of arrivals over departures are considered, the numbers of Chinese migrants in particular are shown in negative figures.³⁵ Nor was the country's Asian population very large. At the time of the Census in 1921, only 0.39 percent of those in New

²⁹ Samoa Act 1921, 12 Geo. V., no. 46, s.100.

³⁰ Inglis, p.12

³¹ S. Eldred-Grigg, Pleasures of the Flesh. Sex and Drugs in Colonial New Zealand 1840 -1914, (Wellington, A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1984), pp.47-48.

³² Ibid.

³³ Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, 10 August 1926. A.J.H.R. D-9A. We can assume that these are British immigrants, as these are the only statistics that interested the Department of Immigration.

³⁴ Return to an order of the House of Representatives of the number of Chinese and Indians arriving in New Zealand during each of the ten years 1921 to 1930, October 1931. LE1 1931/105 (183), National Archives.

³⁵ Ibid.

Zealand could be described as "Asiatics", and by 1926 the percentage had increased to 0.41 percent.³⁶ With such small numbers arriving in the country over the period, the obvious question is what it was that "white" citizens found so objectionable about Asians? The argument which conceived of an economic threat posed by Asian newcomers did not have as much support as those concerns which could be argued to be pertaining to some principle, such as the 'lowering of standards of morality'.³⁷ This in itself indicates a difference in attitudes between the cultures.

The Ideology of Eugenics and Racial Discourse.

While British political thought in particular was not much affected by ideology which implicated the 'racial and national chauvinism' of Imperialism, it was widely believed by many Europeans both in New Zealand and abroad, that the races could be ranked in some kind of moral hierarchy in which white skinned people were high on the list.³⁸ The intermarriage of these differing races was to be discouraged. Eugenic concerns had been raised with all the Dominion Premiers at the 1923 Imperial Conference by the President of the Eugenics Education Society who warned against "interbreeding" because of its tendency to create "inferior types".³⁹ The South African Government had gone on to pass the 1927 Immorality Act which outlawed sexual relations between "blacks" and "whites".⁴⁰

The tendency to differentiate between races was not so common among the general population, but was maintained most strongly by the middle classes and sustained and expanded by a bulk of 'scientific' knowledge cultivated by

³⁶ Census of New Zealand, 1921. Statistics on Race Aliens. The term "Asiatic" included a variety of different "non-white" peoples, including Chinese, Syrians, Indians and "Asiatic Jews".

³⁷ See P. Butler, Opium and Gold, (Martinborough, Alister Taylor, 1977), p.15.

³⁸ Rich, Race Empire in British Politics, pp.70-91

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.68.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.69.

educated individuals around the globe.⁴¹ For example, medical doctor F. G. Crookshank drew links between the 'Mongol' peoples, that is "all the yellow or red races with lank hair, speaking agglutinative or monosyllabic tongues", and the incidence of Down's Syndrome or 'Mongolism' in the Western world.⁴² A visiting British Theosophist with an interest in the occult identified the existence of a new Aryan sub-race in Australia and New Zealand, in a series of lectures in Sydney in 1915. They were so popular that they were published and republished in pamphlet form.⁴³ American intellectual Lothrop Stoddard postulated that Asians could pollute other 'races' like the 'Mediterraneans', by interbreeding:

The (Mediterranean) race has, however, produced many men of high intellectual quality, particularly in the past. Unfortunately, some branches of the stock are racially impaired and impoverished to-day, both by a breeding out of the most intelligent strains and by the admixture of vast numbers of nondescript, inferior Asiatic and African elements.⁴⁴

Stoddard believed that the American and British peoples were the "strongest and stablest elements in a very troubled world (sic)", an assumption which appears to have drawn no comment among his peers.⁴⁵ Interestingly, another supposition, the conception of Asian impact being synonymous with the notion of large numbers, appears widely in most contemporary literature; New Zealand references to Asian migration were made with allusions to the "rising tide of colour."⁴⁶

Historian Nancy Stepan does find some evidence to suggest that doubts were being formed in the fields of eugenics and physical anthropology in Britain in the twenties.⁴⁷ Stepan believes that some geneticists began to

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² F. G. Crookshank, *The Mongol in our Midst. A Study of Man and his three faces*, (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1924).

⁴³ C. W. Leadbetter's book *A New Sub-race. New Zealanders and Australians*, (Adyar, Vasanta Press, 1916) was republished as late as 1973.

⁴⁴ L. Stoddard, *Racial Realities in Europe*. (London, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p.12.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.31.

⁴⁶ *The Auckland Star*, 13 April 1926, p.7.

⁴⁷ N. Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960*, (Basingstoke, The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1982), p.142-43.

challenge the science of human heredity, and the stability of racial 'traits' were questioned, so that by the mid thirties, important books marking an erosion in the confidence of racial science were being written.⁴⁸ In New Zealand, anthropologist Raymond Firth followed this trend, when he published a tract in 1938 which questioned the validity of racial tests for intelligence.⁴⁹ Despite this, Stepan argues that "It was the Nazis who perpetrated the deed, but men and women everywhere believed in the distinction between races, whether white, yellow or black, Aryan or Jew."⁵⁰

With an almost global interest in racial theories it is consistent that in the twentieth century, references to colour were to become criteria of suitability in immigration. In fact, racial derivation and religious orientation became important descriptive measures for record keepers, with Census enumerators recording numbers of British subjects, non British subjects and "Race Aliens", as well as numbers of each group intending permanent residency. It follows then that as Angela Ballara argues the appeal to racial purity was to become "the main stick with which to beat Chinese immigration" and Asian immigration in general, although I would argue there were also other weapons.⁵¹

The Chinese in Greater New Zealand

Asian migration was relatively small in New Zealand but New Zealand citizens watched the arrival of Asians elsewhere in the South Pacific with interest. Moreover, as mentioned, racial theory and anthropology placed New Zealand in a Pacific context. Labour mobility was no new concept in interwar New Zealand. Migration for the purpose of economic gain was a fully understood phenomenon, as was labour migration for the benefit of the

⁴⁸ For example, A. C. Haddon and J. Huxley's We Europeans: A Survey of 'Racial' Problems, (1935).

⁴⁹ R. Firth, Human types, (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1938).

⁵⁰ Stepan, p.140.

⁵¹ Ballara, p.105.

receiving country. Furthermore, indentured labour was a feature of nineteenth century economic development, as in the case of South Africa which used migrant workers contractually long before the foundation of the Union in 1910. Indigenous labourers were transported long distances and often brought from other countries to work for fixed periods of time at low rates of pay in areas like mining and agriculture. The side effect of this system was to keep the standard of living of indigenous workers down, which in turn would depress the standard of living of "white" workers.⁵² The distribution of indentured labourers would work to prevent scarcity of unskilled workers in boom periods and in periods of economic decline would automatically shrink to fit the employment market place.

In the Pacific islands European planters solved the perennial shortage in cheap labour through the trade of thousands of islanders to Queensland, Fiji and Samoa, and through the importation of indentured workers from India and China until 1914. The British in Fiji favoured the latter approach, as did the Germans in Samoa, and by so doing they created the grist for bitter disputes between settlers and their respective colonial governments.⁵³ With the outbreak of war, the protectorate of Samoa was occupied by New Zealand troops in August 1914 under Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Logan. To the New Zealand government the protectorate had been perceived for some time as a potentially important area for the development of New Zealand initiative.⁵⁴ They had observed with interest the development of the plantation economy, the establishment of trans-Pacific shipping, the area's commercial prosperity

⁵² Report of the Economic and Wage Commission (Clay report) (UG 14/1926) cited in Martin Legassick and Francine de Clerq "Capitalism and Migrant Labour in Southern Africa: The Origins and Nature of the System," International Labour Migration. Historical Perspectives, (Middlesex, Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1984), p.140.

⁵³ S. Firth, "Governors versus Settlers. The Dispute over Chinese Labour in German Samoa", N. Z. J. H., Vol. 11, No. 2, October 1977, pp.155-179.

⁵⁴ J. W. Davidson, Samoa Mo Samoa. The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1967), p.91.

and they had closely followed European involvement in Samoa's economic and political life.

In 1918 Harry Holland MP, estimated that around one-seventh of Samoa's population - around 5000 people - were Chinese indentured labourers.⁵⁵ Indeed it was this incidence of cheap Chinese labour in the Pacific which reinforced for New Zealand some of the anti-Asian hostilities which had been so common in the nineteenth century. For Asians became associated with economic competition. Labourers, both Chinese and Melanesian, were brought in to work in Samoan plantations on three-year terms with provision for two-year renewals and compulsory repatriation. The Chinese were considered to be a security risk in Samoa, as there was some rioting in 1920 and problems existed over a shortage of rice and of shipping for repatriation, as well as of capital required for improvements in conditions.⁵⁶ The problems were, however, contributed to by Logan's own actions. He allowed German planters to carry guns for protection, refused to extend Chinese labourer's contracts, and curtailed the Chinese's civil liberties in the interests of keeping the Samoan race pure.⁵⁷ Despite difficulty in obtaining replacements for Chinese labourers repatriated at the end of their terms of employment, Colonel Logan sought and obtained British permission for a short-term scheme which coped with labour needs and with shipping problems by reducing the number of Chinese and Melanesians by half over the space of four years.

Holland's own anti-indentured labour view was no new phenomenon. In June 1900 Prime Minister Richard Seddon, on a visit to Rarotonga, raised the prospect of strict controls on the immigration of Chinese if annexation were to

⁵⁵ H. E. Holland, Samoa. A Story that teems with tragedy. (Wellington, The Maoriland Worker Printing and Publishing Company, 1918), p.3. Holland was at this stage the editor of the Maoriland Worker. He became an M.P. in 1918, the parliamentary leader of the Labour Party in 1919, and in 1920 visited Samoa as a member of a parliamentary party investigating New Zealand's colonial mandate.

⁵⁶ M. Boyd, "The Record in Western Samoa to 1945," in Ross, A. (ed) New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century, (Auckland, Longman Paul Ltd., 1969), p.117.

⁵⁷ D. Munro, "Logan, Robert," Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Vol. III, 1901-1920, p.280.

come about. However, in general there was overall support both in government and in the opposition to continue the system of indentured labour.⁵⁸ The eventual abolition of the indenture system by New Zealand's labour government was viewed as a "triumph" by representatives of the working classes,⁵⁹ and even though Chinese in this instance were the theoretical victims, little time was given to considering the pathos of their position. Primary focus was given in Samoa and in New Zealand to the position of Chinese as cheap labour; much attention was given to the fact that Chinese were able to work long hours and were frugal with their savings. This belief arose primarily out of a concern that Chinese in New Zealand were able to produce more cheaply than New Zealanders and thus would undercut any potential profit to New Zealanders, by undercutting the standard of living of men working in New Zealand.⁶⁰ Further consideration given to Chinese in Samoa related to the security risk they posed. A strike by Chinese workers in August 1929 which resulted in fourteen casualties was attributed to internal divisions in the Western Samoan Chinese community.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Davidson, pp.98-99.

⁵⁹ Holland, Samoa,; The Maoriland Worker, 8 August, 1923, p.4.

⁶⁰ L. Ross,. "The Difficulties of an Internationalist," The New Zealand Highway: The Monthly Journal of the Workers' Educational Association of New Zealand, Vol. 2, No. 9, July 11, 1927, p.9.

⁶¹ N.Z.P.D., Vol.222, 13 August 1929, pp.183-84.

The Chinese in New Zealand

The debate concerning the Chinese presence in the new protectorate of Samoa was conducted against the background of more general Asian migration concerns in New Zealand itself which had started in the nineteenth century. There was a longstanding campaign by the labour movement to stop the importation of labour and the prospect of the new colonial acquisition potentially fuelling Chinese migration had heightened these concerns. The extensive literature on this migration makes a number of points relevant to migration in this period.⁶²

Since 1871 the issue of immigration had been linked to the question of the restriction of Asian migration, most particularly Chinese, which is unsurprising perhaps because Chinese were the first 'race aliens' to arrive in any numbers. Large scale Chinese migration to New Zealand began in 1866 as an extension of migration from Australia, ostensibly in large-scale organised chain migration in search of gold.⁶³ Arguably the rate of increase of migration was affected by word of mouth, as the first migrant settlers created a flow of chain migration by bringing over their family and friends.

The "influx" caused a great deal of discussion. A Parliamentary Select Committee on Chinese Immigration submitted a report in 1871 discussing popular allegations such as cleanliness and morality, and in 1881 a £10 poll tax was introduced for every Chinese immigrant. By 1899, an Immigration Restriction Act was introduced which prohibited the landing of people not of British or Irish parentage, who could not fill out in any European language an application form.⁶⁴ This principle was to last for the next twenty years. In the

⁶² Borrie; N. B. Fong, *The Chinese in New Zealand. A study in assimilation*, (Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1959); Sedgewick; J. Leckie, "In Defence of Race and Empire: The White New Zealand League at Pukekohe", *N. Z. J.H.*, Vol. 19, No. 2, October 1985; Rachagan; P. S. O'Connor, "Keeping New Zealand White, 1908-20", *N.Z.J.H.*, No. 2, 1968.

⁶³ M. Taher, "The Asians" in K. W. Thompson and A. D. Trlin *Immigrants in New Zealand* (Palmerston North, Massey University Press, 1970), p.38

⁶⁴ Also known as the Natal formula.

early decades of the twentieth century, a number of popular organisations peddling the racial purity message, such as the White New Zealand League, the Anti-Asiatic Society and the White Race League, were formed. Over a period of fifty years discrimination on racial grounds had gained sufficient support that legislators felt justified placing a levy on the immigration of a particular racial group, and placing the right of refusal in the hands of a single individual.

Race and equality: Imperial policy and the New Zealand context.

On the international level New Zealand was coming to maturity as a Dominion and as a member of the British Empire by the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1931 the Statute of Westminster established the legal fulfillment of the sovereignty of the Dominions (although it was not adopted by New Zealand until 1947). The relationship with Britain and things British was far-reaching, covering areas such as trade, defence and most areas of international relations, as well as being a constitutional relationship embodied by the British Commonwealth of Nations. The imperial link remained strong, despite New Zealand's greater autonomy. Retrospectively, commentator F. L. Wood described New Zealand's actions in the international arena as a "modest but individual part in the British people's experiments in international government."⁶⁵ International law in the interwar period recognised the right of every country to distinguish and exclude those individuals which it deemed to be undesirable, for example, criminals, 'imbeciles', the diseased and the indigent.⁶⁶ As part of its new status New Zealand gave cognisance to this in its legislation and also adopted the provisions of the Imperial Acts relating to the

⁶⁵ F. L. Wood, *This New Zealand*, (Hamilton, Paul's Book Arcade, 1952), p.148.

⁶⁶ T. D. H. Hall, "The Status of Aliens in New Zealand," *The Legal Status of Aliens in Pacific Countries. An International survey of law and practice concerning immigration, naturalisation and deportation of aliens and their legal rights and disabilities*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1937), p.280. New Zealand legislators passed the Undesirable Immigrants Act in 1919.

naturalisation of aliens⁶⁷; that is, foreign nationals from non-British territories. Commentators in Britain, such the Royal Colonial Institute's journal *United Empire*, supported the use of racial restriction in the Dominions;

. . the objections of British-born subjects to unrestricted intercourse with Asiatics are sound. . . the ideal of a white community cannot be realised if the colour question is ignored, nor can the western standards of living and wages be maintained in competition with cheap oriental labour.⁶⁸

The situation became more complicated in the case of Asian peoples who were also British citizens. At the Imperial Conference of 1921 the Indian delegation presented a resolution concerning the position of British Indians in the Empire. India had proved itself in the first World War by sending a large number of troops to fight and in other ways had demonstrated its loyalty to the Empire, and in return it wanted equal treatment in the Empire, regardless of race. The resolution desired that the inequality of treatment of Indians living in other parts of the Empire should be recognised, and was directed mainly at Africa for the treatment of Indians in Kenya, but it posed a problem for all of the Dominions.⁶⁹ The Empire was supposed to be free from race prejudice but this could not impinge upon a Dominion's right to control their own immigration procedures. To modify this exclusiveness somewhat and to mollify the Indian government, a Reciprocity Resolution was passed at the 1923 Imperial Conference which provided that the exclusion of individuals from Empire countries on grounds of "colour" was unreasonable. Furthermore, it was agreed that Indians already permanently resident in other British countries should be allowed to bring in their wives and dependant children. It was, however, considered reasonable to exclude people on the grounds of economic protection or social welfare; a situation which it seems would allow countries the leeway to justify racism. Spurred on by a tribute from Indian Representative Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Prime Minister Massey defended the

⁶⁷ These laws, are discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

⁶⁸ *The United Empire*, Vol.12 (3), March 1921, p.135

⁶⁹ Borrie, p.175

country's restrictive policy on the grounds of economic protectionism and denied the existence of race prejudice.⁷⁰ Nowhere, however, did he mention lessening entry restrictions for Indian immigrants;

I would like to endorse that, so far as New Zealand is concerned, we are practically giving the Natives of India resident in New Zealand the same privileges which are enjoyed by people of the Anglo-Saxon race who are settled there. There is practically no difference between them. . . ⁷¹

The issue was a delicate one. Historically an alleged threat of an influx of "coloured labour" to New Zealand had been averted by xenophobic legislation.⁷² Only those of British parentage could enter the country without restriction. New Zealand, Australia and Canada could and did consider themselves "outposts of Western Civilisation on the shores of Asia."⁷³ This position was all the more precarious for the Dominions' state of underpopulation, which was perceived as the weak link "in the chain of Imperial defence."⁷⁴ In this sense being Asian embodied and defined "otherness", and racial discourse served to support this. However, in the early 1920s the British Empire found itself caught out. In the wake of moves to grant various colonies Dominion status, Britain could not deny Indian British subjects the same right of equality of treatment as its other subjects. New Zealand as a member of the Empire could no longer vindicate exclusion on the grounds of colour without offending its international and imperial partners.

A pattern of racial discrimination was, however, well established in New Zealand by the interwar period. Discrimination drew attention to the contrasts between Asians and British citizens, which, it was argued, threatened the status

⁷⁰ Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru argued that the New Zealand government treated Indians on an equal footing with other inhabitants. Prime Minister's statement in Imperial Conference 1923, Summary of Proceedings, in *A. J. H. R.* 1924, A-6, p.69.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² The fear of Asian expansion in the post World War One era was partially responsible for a teaching emphasis on the Dominions special position in the British Empire in New Zealand's schools. See R. Openshaw, "Patriotism and the New Zealand Primary School: the decisive years of the twenties," D. Phil (History), Hamilton, University of Waikato, 1978, p.79.

⁷³ Editorial, *The New Zealand Herald*, 20 May 1921. Quoted in *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, in *ibid.*, 25 January 1937, p.603.

quo. Those guardians of racial purity who were committed to keeping New Zealand "a white man's country",⁷⁵ had powerful voices.

The White New Zealand League was initially formed in 1926 to keep the Pukekohe district free from Asian peoples.⁷⁶ However, it eventually received support from 160 local bodies representing 670,000 people, and gained sympathy in non-partisan newspapers.⁷⁷ In 1932 the League organised a parliamentary petition requesting that all Asians in New Zealand be repatriated, a move which historian Nigel Murphy argues put an end to permanent residency being granted to Chinese people for the next twenty years.⁷⁸

The R. S. A. was also especially vocal, as returned servicemen viewed an increase in Asian migration as an economic threat to their pre-existing right to secure land for farming.⁷⁹ Various unions, among them the Waterside Workers' Union, the Timber Workers' Union, and the Furniture Trade Industrial Union, also expressed anti-Asian feelings on the grounds of a fear of economic competition.⁸⁰ On 30 August 1920, the Wellington Returned Soldiers' Association requested that the Government take "immediate steps" to stop "the invasion of this country by coloured people, alien in race, language and religion" on the grounds that they were potentially powerful and could be "a menace to the Dominion in the event of trouble in the East."⁸¹ Nation-wide, branches of the R.S.A. lobbied members of parliament to query the recent "influx", from January to June, of 389 Chinese and 180 Indians. As a result an

⁷⁵ Attributed to W. F. Massey in "Don't Fail to Read this Appeal" The White New Zealand League, 23 March 1927.

⁷⁶ Leckie.

⁷⁷ K. Tiwari, "The Indian Community in New Zealand. A Historical Survey, in K. Tiwari (ed) "Indians in New Zealand. Studies in a sub culture, (Wellington, Price Milburn and Company Ltd., 1980), p.9.

⁷⁸ N. Murphy, The Poll-tax in New Zealand: A research paper, Commissioned by the New Zealand Chinese Association, 1994, p.38.

⁷⁹ Leckie, p.118.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ The Press, September 3, 1920, p.6.

Immigration Restriction Amendment Bill was introduced in 1920.⁸² The Act gave legal endorsement to the restriction of certain types of immigration on the grounds of race, in particular, that of Asians. Asian were particularly repugnant as "Race aliens" because while their foreign nationality engendered all the negative characteristics usually associated with "alienness", their physical difference precluded total assimilation. While the Act did not specifically mention Asians, it made race-specific legislation unnecessary because all "aliens" were required to obtain a permit to enter the country. Section two specifically related to Indian immigrants, deeming them not to be British by birth and parentage despite their status as indigenous peoples of a British protectorate.⁸³

It should be remembered that the desire to restrict Asian immigration and interaction in New Zealand was not unanimous. In the North Island prominent members of the Indian and Chinese communities wrote to various newspapers attacking 'misrepresentation' by the White New Zealand League, and there has been some suggestion that missionaries living in New Zealand were opposed to the racial nature of restrictions.⁸⁴ Upholders of the socialist ideal also found themselves unable to fully support the call to restrict immigration. The *Maoriland Worker* had at times been required to criticise some unions for their refusal to accept some Indian workers.⁸⁵ The editor of the *Christchurch Press* mused over the predicament in which Labour leaders found themselves. For Labour

not only opposes the immigration of coloured labour, but "downs tools" when a handful of Hindus are given work alongside, and at the same remuneration as white workers. Yet it professes loudly to believe and work for the "brotherhood of man."

⁸² G. H. Scholefield and T.D.H. Hall, "Asiatic Immigration in New Zealand: Its History and Legislation", in *The Legal Status of Aliens*, p.275.

⁸³ *Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920*, 11 Geo. V., no. 23, s.5(2).

⁸⁴ Leckie, p.115; Ponton, p.52.

⁸⁵ *Maoriland Worker*, 1 December 1919.

The editor himself was firmly of the belief that most New Zealand workers were against coloured labour and "that miscegenation against which all healthy-minded people instinctively revolt."⁸⁶ Some other New Zealand commentators counselled moderation on the issue of racial interaction in New Zealand, most notably those with Socialist principles who argued that the cause of the worker was the same all over the world. John A. Brailsford, who wrote for the Workers' Educational Association, admitted a concern about unrestricted immigration of coloured peoples but argued that the spread of technologies and the advent of international investment and interaction meant that New Zealand could not afford to be exclusionist.⁸⁷ Brailsford berated the press for not being able to present an open-minded discussion on inter-racial relations and advocated that New Zealanders should give consideration to looking at how they related to minority groups, or even at how Fiji or Samoa coped with racial problems. Furthermore, he suggested that one or other of the University Colleges should develop a course of "Oriental Studies" with which to contribute to inter-racial understanding.⁸⁸

Similarly, Lloyd Ross impressed on the same readers the need for a systematic approach to regulating immigration in the interest of workers, and the rejection of all discourse on the superiority of the white race. There was, he argued, a duty for the people of the world to improve the conditions of the 'struggling peoples of the East,' and on the part of New Zealanders to understand and present the country in as accurate a light as possible to would be immigrants.⁸⁹

Buoyed by a large public outcry, many New Zealand politicians jumped on the racial bandwagon, questioning not only the social and industrial benefit of

⁸⁶ *The Press*, 6 July, 1920, p.6.

⁸⁷ J. A. Brailsford, . "New Zealand and Racial Intercourse," *The New Zealand Highway: The Monthly Journal of the Workers' Educational Association of New Zealand*, Vol. 1, No. 10, August 2, 1926.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁸⁹ L. Ross, "The Difficulties of an Internationalist," p.9.

Asian immigrants but also envisioning a threat to "our national integrity" by the importation of certain diseases.⁹⁰ The threat was also seen as physical. On 14 September 1920, parliament spent nearly five indulgent hours discussing the perils of the 'teeming millions of China'.⁹¹ The Immigration Restriction Bill had almost unanimous support, but debate ensued over its justifications, as well as for the sake of clarification. The member for Waikato, Mr Young, spent some time separating Indians from Christian Englishmen:

Trample on, spit on and abuse the Native, and he smiles and salaams; abuse his religion and you have a life enemy. And such a religion! It lies like an awful pall of hellish sin over the minds and consciences of the people of India. A religion that inculcates lasciviousness; that sets up the symbols and teaches the worship of the human sexual organs. A religion that drives the widow to the suttee pile; that throws the surplus offspring to Mother Ganges; that teaches merit in the suffocation of aged parents by a throatful of sacred mud. . .⁹²

The Minister of Customs, William Downie Stewart, was very interested in the Asian argument. A careful and judicious policy-maker, he could not see the need to offend the Chinese who might someday have a stronger political position.⁹³ He drew attention to the licence given by the British government;

The whole policy of the British Government was very well expressed in 1897, by Mr Chamberlain, and nothing could be clearer than what he then said. He said: "We quite sympathise with the determination of the white inhabitants of these colonies, which are in comparatively close proximity to millions and hundreds of Asiatics, that there shall not be an influx of people alien in civilisation, alien in religion, alien in customs, whose influx moreover, would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population. An immigration of that kind must, I quite understand, in the interest of the colonies, be prevented at all hazards, and we shall not offer any opposition to the proposals intended with that object."⁹⁴

The government could see the "desirability" of having a white New Zealand. But some members were not necessarily happy with the way legislation was progressing, citing concerns about international relations with the United States, France, India and the Chinese Government.⁹⁵ A certain amount of

⁹⁰ Ponton, p.46; *N.Z.P.D.* Vol.187, 14 September 1920, pp.934-5.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.905-942.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.935.

⁹³ For more details on Downie Stewart, see S. Dale, "Stewart, William Downie", in C. Orange (ed) *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. III, 1901-1920, pp.488-90.

⁹⁴ *N. Z. P.D.*, Vol.187, 14 September 1920, p.909.

⁹⁵ Interview with Mr W. Downie Stewart, *The Press*, 15 September 1920, p.7.

embarrassment regarding the treatment of Indians, was voiced by Socialist M. P. Harry Holland;

... I for one deny our right to make legislation against the Indians, and then force the Indians, at the point of the gun, to comply with our legislation, while refusing them the right in their own country to make laws of the same nature relating to us. I would apply the same argument in the case of the Chinese. We all know the history of the opium war, and none of us want anything like that to happen in the days of the future.⁹⁶

By 15 September 1920 parliament was reviewing the second reading of the Immigration Restriction Act. The intention of the Act was, in the words of the Prime Minister Mr Massey, to keep the population "pure and loyal". He quoted the Imperial War Conference of 1918 as determining that the communities of the Commonwealth of Nations had the right to determine the composition of their nation, indicating the government's steadfast belief that in terms of Imperial etiquette, they had just cause.⁹⁷

The legislation was potentially embarrassing to the British Government, as China had ally status under the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) and the Treaty of Tianjin (1858). At any rate the *Round Table*, a vehicle for imperialist discussion, was not encouraging, labelling the ensuing Bill as "An Act for the total exclusion from New Zealand of the Chinese" and arguing that New Zealand was moving outside British Empire policy;

In spite of projects for a League of Nations and of attempts to bring the peoples of the world into closer touch and closer sympathy with each other, New Zealand's Government is adopting the attitude of "here comes a stranger. 'Eave 'alf a brick at him." Their Immigration Restriction Bill is one of the most arbitrary and reactionary measures ever introduced in a British community.⁹⁸

The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act of 1920, allowed people who were not of British or Irish birth and heritage to enter the country only if they had made a postal application in advance for a permit to enter; a permit which was granted at the absolute discretion of the Minister of Customs.⁹⁹

⁹⁶N.Z.P.D., Vol. 187, September 14, 1920, p.913.

⁹⁷The Prime Minister quoted in *The Press*, 15 September 1920, p.7; Scholefield and Hall, p.275.

⁹⁸*The Round Table*, Vol.11, December 1920, pp.223.

⁹⁹See chapters 6 and 7.

Interestingly "aboriginal natives" of any part of the Empire excepting New Zealand were not regarded as British citizens for the purposes of the Act, and this aspect did not change after the 1923 Imperial Conference Resolution. While it did provide that the use of education tests be repealed,¹⁰⁰ the Act did require fingerprinting, something to which Chinese objected for it inferred criminality.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the poll tax of £100, which was used by only one other country in the empire (Australia), was also retained with Chinese paying more than £100,000 in 1920 alone.¹⁰² This tax required people who were not "white" British subjects, to deposit £2 (which was later increased to £10) on entry to the country which would be refunded on leaving. The measure was rigorously enforced.¹⁰³

The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920 also gave the Minister of Customs the authority to issue temporary permits for visitors to New Zealand, for matters of health, business or pleasure. A very precise and careful strategy was developed for policing the ports. The Minister delegated his power to the Collectors of Customs at each port, and in turn, at the Collectors discretion, they issued temporary permits for six months.¹⁰⁴ Procedures were adopted to safeguard the system; Boarding Inspectors visited ships on arrival and interviewed every restricted or prohibited immigrant as declared by the ship's master.¹⁰⁵ If it was anticipated that there might be difficulty in making the visitor leave the country, they could require a deed of covenant to be executed or they would issue temporary permits. The Boarding Inspector

¹⁰⁰ In fact the use of 'tests' had been the means with which to trip prospective migrants. The individual had been required, depending on the whim of the Customs Officer to fill out the application form in any European language.

¹⁰¹ D. McGill, *The Guardians at the Gate: the history of the New Zealand Customs Department*, (Wellington, Silver Owl Press, 1991), p.88.

¹⁰² Statistics cited in Fong, p.30.

¹⁰³ *The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920*, 11 Geo. V., no. 23.

¹⁰⁴ Ponton, p.81.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.82.

could then refer any uncertain cases to the Collector of Customs, who could in turn refer it to the Comptroller or the Minister of Customs.¹⁰⁶

While these provisions were intended to help people who came to New Zealand as visitors, some people such as a number of Yugoslavs who arrived in 1925, were ignorant of their visitor status, and were unhappily forced to return to their country of origin.¹⁰⁷ Some Asian visitors also attempted to escape the system by applying for an extension, but after having considered the spirit of the legislation, the Minister of Customs decided that Asians and "coloured people" should not be able to work in any area that did not require expert, technical or specialised knowledge.¹⁰⁸ This move clarified that anyone who came to New Zealand on a temporary permit could work only if they were true experts in their field, and it served to distinguish bona fide visitors. An order by the Governor-General in council in February 1927 provided that temporary permits could not be given to people who had already received a temporary permit, except after two years from their last departure.¹⁰⁹ Legislation served to strengthen the perception of Asians and other "non-white" peoples as being somehow different and in need of more restrictive legislation. It also supported the sense of belonging afforded to British subjects who entered the Dominion after 1920. If subjects of the British Empire were not required to apply for entry permits in advance or pay poll taxes, then surely that amounted to a greater entitlement to emigrate?

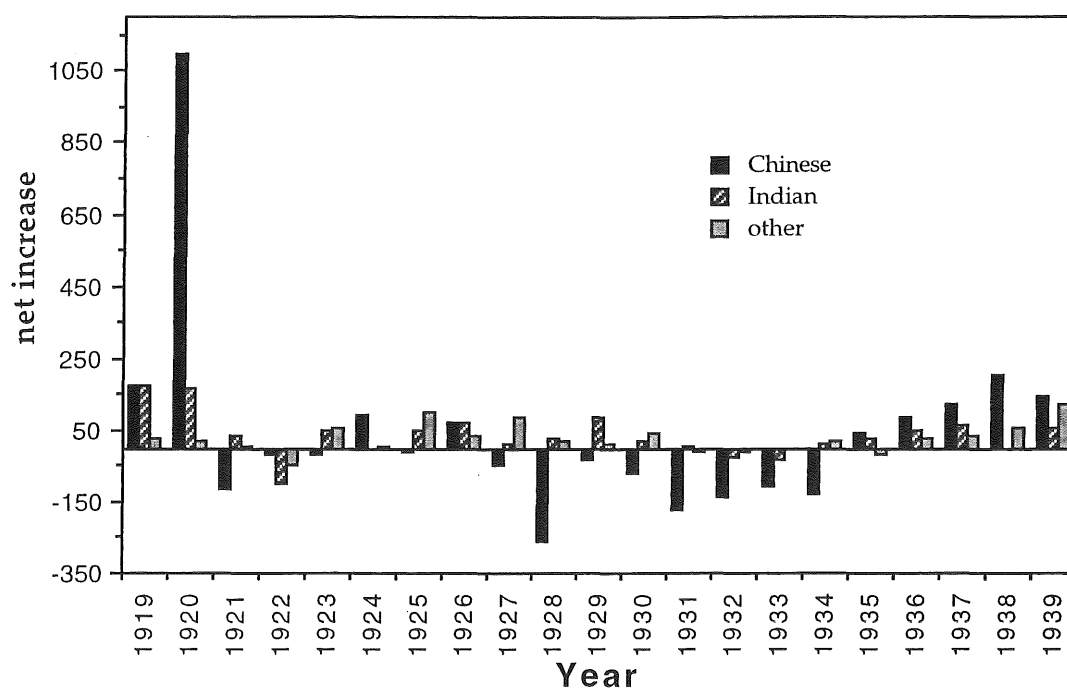
¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.85-86.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.86

¹⁰⁹ New Zealand Gazette, no.10, 24 February 1927, p.508.

Figure 10: Net Increase in Immigration of "Race Aliens" to New Zealand, 1919-1939.



§The net increase is represented by the excess of arrivals over departures.

*Source: N. Z. O. Y. 1930, 1931, 1940.

In reality, the physical threat of the teeming millions was not so great as alleged. The Asian population of New Zealand had fallen during World War One,¹¹⁰ and only in the post war years was there a significant increase in both Chinese and Indian migration (see Figure 10). The arrival of 1477 Chinese in 1920 may have been largely responsible for the concern. But it should be noted that no record was kept at this time of the number of aliens, Chinese or otherwise, who intended to live in New Zealand permanently, or even to stay for a certain period of time. For this reason, there can be no true indication of an intention to swell New Zealand's numbers with Asians. The increase might just as easily be credited to the overflow created by the freezing of wartime civilian immigration and shipping. While there was an increase in 'aliens' in

¹¹⁰ Over the entire period of the war, a total of 1365 Chinese and 454 Indians entered the country. See *N. Z. O. Y.*, 1924, p.81.

New Zealand from the 1916 to 1921 Census, the numbers were not as large as one might expect. The Chinese for example had increased 52.12 percent. When a survey was eventually taken in 1922, it was found that only 204 "race aliens" from a total of 549 intended permanent residence.¹¹¹ It has been historically typical of New Zealand, that one of the commonest methods for formulating public opinion and creating the incentive and impulse for stringent legislation has been to play upon the fears and self-interest of the economically uncertain section of the electorate.¹¹²

The 'success' of the Immigration Restriction Act can be measured by a substantial decline in numbers of Asiatic immigrants in the eighteen months after the Bill was introduced.¹¹³ In effect, the legislation put a stop to all Asiatic immigration with the exception of wives and families of those who were already naturalised or born in New Zealand. Anti-Asian agitation calmed after the 1920 Act, until 1926 when potato growers were hit by low prices, which they attributed to Asian competition. As a result, The White New Zealand League drew to the public's attention the dangers of the "Yellow Peril". Consequently, the system was more strictly administered after 1926, and the number of immigrants intending permanent residence fell, for the reason that permanent residency permits were no longer issued to Chinese or Indians. Furthermore, permanent residents could no longer send for wives and families. Asian settlers understood that they were less equal than "white" New Zealand residents, and from 1927 large numbers, particularly Chinese, left the country.

It should be remembered that New Zealand's restrictive actions did not take place within an international legislative vacuum. The United States reacted in 1921 to an influx in immigration by introducing a quota system

¹¹¹ N. Z. O.Y., 1924.

¹¹² Scholefield and Hall, p.277.

¹¹³ The Minister of Customs, Downie Stewart, noted in introducing the Immigration Restriction Amendment Bill, 1923 that in the year and a half before the 1920 Act 1234 Chinese and 381 Indians immigrated, whereas for the same amount of time after its introduction, only 166 Chinese and 11 Indians arrived. N.Z.P.D., Vol. 201, 24 July 1923, p.152.

which heavily favoured Northern and Western Europeans and restricted the entrance of Southern and Eastern Europeans, and defined 'aliens' as Chinese and Philippine citizens who were not United States citizens.¹¹⁴ Like the New Zealand pro-white groups the United States also felt an outbreak of anti-coloured discrimination after the First World War which was only quelled when a genuine crisis, the depression, drew the public's attention away.¹¹⁵ Across the Tasman sea, the White Australia policy allowed the entry of non-Europeans for any amount of time only if they were government officials, ministers of religion, merchants, students or relatives of already established Asian Australians. From 1921 immigrants to Canada were required to obtain entrance visas in advance of their arrival unless they were British or American citizens.

Domestic legislation: Asians as Less Equal Citizens, 1900-1926.

Other measures were put in place by the early twenties to control those Asians for whom the immigration restrictions were too late. In many cases these measures provided specific disabilities for Asians, even those who were British subjects. The White New Zealand League advocated the prevention of further Asian immigration and the boycotting of Asian businesses through the creation of rigid labour legislation. It also attempted to have a statutory provision made whereby the leasing or selling of land to Asians would be subject to local body approval. However this was never achieved.¹¹⁶

The provisions of the Shops and Offices Act 1921-22 demonstrate how discriminatory legislation could be used to restrict the entry into a trade or business of foreign national groups who used different working practices. In

¹¹⁴ Department of State Executive order no. 270, June 5, 1940 in A.J.C.P.4568:816, P128/20, Immigration Orders of the Dominions.

¹¹⁵ J. F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants*, (Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), p.71.

¹¹⁶ Tiwari, p.12.

the trade of the fruitier only one person was deemed to be the occupier and thus spouses or family members in the case of Asian families were held to be 'assistants' and were thus subject to regulations. The Act was intended to protect the rights of assistants in terms of hours and working conditions and it regulated the closing hours of all shops in order to prevent unfair competition. In response to a petition from the majority of shop owners in a given trade, restrictions could also be placed to prevent the sale of goods as a sideline in another trade. Most importantly, however, the Shops and Offices Act declared that the occupier of the shop, that is the person who intended to trade in the shop or office, was required to be a British subject, and hawkers were not allowed to be "occupiers".¹¹⁷ Similar regulations were also placed on laundries which was also an occupation favoured by Chinese.¹¹⁸

Restrictions were also placed on the ability of aliens to own property, and conduct their affairs. Under the Shipping and Seamen Act 1908 the owner of a ship had to be a British subject or the ship could not be registered in New Zealand.¹¹⁹ Other personal property could be held by aliens in the same manner as British citizens, but only as given them in legislation. The alien could not vote, nor could she or he hold parliamentary office.¹²⁰ Furthermore, while an alien was triable in the same manner as a British citizen, he or she could not serve on a jury.¹²¹ Interestingly, in a mining district, which was constituted under the Mining Act 1926, all holders of miner's rights except aliens were deemed to be householders - the body which elected school committees. In all other areas an alien householder was now allowed to vote for school committees.¹²² This would appear to indicate a particular

¹¹⁷ Shops and Offices Amendment Act 1927, 18 Geo. V., no.53, s.24; Shops and Offices Act, 1921-22, 12 Geo. V., no.46, s.32 (13), 36.

¹¹⁸ Factories Act 1921-2, 12 Geo. V., no.53, s.20.

¹¹⁹ Shipping and Seamen Act 1908, New Zealand Consolidated Statutes, no.178, s.310(2).

¹²⁰ Electoral Act 1927, 18 Geo. V, no.44, s.15, 32; Legislature Amendment Act 1911, 2 Geo. V., No. 19. s.2.

¹²¹ Juries Act 1908, Public Acts of New Zealand, no.90, Vol.IV, s.5, 140.

¹²² Education Act 1914, 5 Geo. V, no.56, s.2.

unwillingness on the part of the mining community to allow "foreign interference".

The issue of opium appeared whenever Asian immigration was discussed. In the nineteenth century, when it was widely available through world wide trafficking, the drug was briefly considered by New Zealand authorities as a lucrative cash crop.¹²³ Its consumption was not illegal until after World War One, although attitudes among the "moral majority" had changed by the late nineteenth century, when initial concerns were raised of the danger of the substance as a poison.¹²⁴ The earliest outrages to public decency were in the matter of etiquette; for while European women could drink the liquid they were not able smoke it without condemnation. Gentlemen were able to imbibe smoke, but not so much as to appear 'fast'. By contrast Chinese migrants in the late nineteenth century smoked unashamedly, building opium dens where they settled; actions that quickly became evidence of depravity in the eyes of the white public. In 1900 a petition organised by the Christian mission to the Chinese was presented to Parliament which asked for the restriction of the importation and sale of opium. Parliamentary discussion followed with the advocacy of laws giving the authorities draconian rights of entry and search of Chinese premises.¹²⁵ In 1926 the prospect of large-scale Chinese migration was still associated with an immoral tide of gambling and opium dens.¹²⁶ By comparison, other narcotics such as cocaine and cannabis were not prohibited until 1927, when further legislation provided that Chinese homes could be searched if it was thought that they were being used for smoking opium.¹²⁷ In such incidents a full report was given in national newspapers of the parties involved, their ages and occupations, and the instruments used.¹²⁸ British

¹²³ T. Simpson, *Shame and Disgrace. A History of Lost Scandals in New Zealand*, (Auckland, Penguin Books Ltd., 1992), p.218.

¹²⁴ Eldred-Grigg, *Pleasures*, p.110.

¹²⁵ *The Opium Prohibition Bill 1901* 1 Edw. VII, no.26.

¹²⁶ *The Press*, 3 May 1926, p.7.

¹²⁷ *Dangerous Drugs Act 1927*, 18 Geo. V., no.18, s.11.

¹²⁸ For example, "Opium Raid," *The Press*, 12 September 1929, p.4.

New Zealand citizens were to be able to recognise the perpetrator of this particular crime as Chinese.

The application of Social Welfare Benefits, was also discriminatory. Not only were Maori ineligible for benefits, but no pensions or family allowances, except the National Provident Benefit¹²⁹ were available to Asians, whether naturalised, British-born or otherwise, except under the direction of the Minister.¹³⁰ One exception was the 1926 National Provident Benefit which did apply to all citizens who were naturalised, irrespective of their race. Overall though, the social legislation of the period sent a message that "race aliens" were untrustworthy and were unlikely to act reasonably by the laws of the land. There was questionable logic, in that while they were to be held accountable for their actions they were not allowed a presence in representative institutions.

Asian Society in New Zealand: the immigrants at home.

Indians, chiefly Punjabis, were drawn to the Pacific region as a result of the indenture system in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries. During the early years of the twentieth century news was spread by indenture agents operating in the Punjab, of the opportunities open in Fiji. Those who were able to raise the fares themselves did not bond themselves to an indenture agreement and so sparked the first movement of free labour. In these circumstances, New Zealand acted as an 'overflow' by enticing a small number whose original destination had been Fiji.¹³¹ Many of the ships destined for Fiji stopped in

¹²⁹ The national provident scheme which was a government subsidised contributory pension, was open to all New Zealand residents who were required to not be absent from the country from more than two years at one time or more than five years in all, while they were contributors.

¹³⁰ Pensions Act 1926, 17 Geo. V, no.56, s.91. Family Allowances Act 1926, 17 Geo. V, no.30, s.8. Applicants could be and were disqualified if they were aliens or "Asiatics". See S. S. Accession number W1844, Item ref:F126, Box 75, Family Allowances - Aliens 1927-1935, National Archives.

¹³¹ W. H. McLeod, Punjabis in New Zealand. A History of Punjabi Migration, 1890-1940,

Auckland, and there some discovered that their knowledge of English was enough to gain permission to land, while others went on to Fiji, and gained the minimum English necessary in Suva and then returned. Those that came, did so not solely in the interests of labouring or trading, but primarily in order to gain money to send to families back home. As in the case of Chinese migrants in Samoa, the Fijian Indians were also seen as a menace to be sent away. Parliamentary discussion wildly exaggerated the appeal of New Zealand to the vaguely threatening Asian masses. One politician alleged that "sixty thousand Hindus" would drift throughout New Zealand.¹³²

The next phase of Punjabi migration was started by large groups of young men who headed directly to New Zealand, as a result of information about the country reaching Eastern Doabi during World War One. It was initially stimulated by an extension of emigration to Australia, and arguably from there many came to New Zealand, having heard about the country from Lascar seamen and domestics.¹³³ Unsurprisingly, New Zealand's Indian population in the interwar period was largely male between the ages of twenty and thirty-four.¹³⁴

There were strong cultural and economic reasons to explain why single males decided to travel great distances. For Indian migrants it appears that the reason for migration was economic necessity and population pressure.¹³⁵ Contemporary writer Sir Malcolm Darling emphasised how need encouraged Punjabi men to develop new skills and to find new means of finding an alternative income, such as by emigration because of the pressure on land.¹³⁶ Darling's study places emphasis on the positive difference that repatriation

(Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University, 1986), p.34.

¹³² N.Z.P.D. Vol.187, 14 September 1920, Mr Kellet, M. P. for Dunedin North, p.926.

¹³³ McLeod p.33; Taher, p.39.

¹³⁴ Statistics from A. Zodgekar "Demographic Aspects of Indians in New Zealand," in K. Tiwari (ed) Indians in New Zealand. Studies in a sub culture, (Wellington, Price Milburn and Company Ltd., 1980), p.188.

¹³⁵ Tiwari, p.3.

¹³⁶ M. Darling, Rusticus Loquitur or The Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village, (London, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1930), p.178

earning from overseas had on some areas of the Punjab.¹³⁷ W. H. McLeod agrees in essence with Darling's findings, but argues that emigration was not only pre-empted by a desire to be able to afford land, but also to have the capital required to build housing and pay for the marriage of the family's daughters.¹³⁸ For many emigrants, then, the most basic motivation was status arising from a number of complex economic and social pressures. Furthermore, the example set by a single man in deciding to emigrate could, McLeod argues, play a part in helping others in the village decide to move overseas. Emigration by the young men of the village could become established social practise¹³⁹

For thousands of years the extended family has been the basis of the social unit for Chinese families, and the clan was the main form of social organisation. In Indian families there was a similar focus and cohesiveness to family and caste ties, and in both ethnic groups there was a pervasive loyalty to these social structures.¹⁴⁰ While Indian social structure provided internal cohesiveness, it also isolated families. Many remarked upon the loneliness they felt, and so for this reason and others various Indian Associations were set up in the early twenties in the main centres of the North Island. In a similar manner, the Chinese familial institutions provided a sense of belonging, and Chinese political groups such as the Chee Kung Tong, The Chinese Reform Society, and Kuomintang attracted relatively strong memberships from the mid 1920s.¹⁴¹ Family and clan was especially important in accounting for the distribution and concentration of groups in certain geographic locations in New Zealand. Clearly the Asian family structure visibly differed from the traditional British extended family.

¹³⁷ M. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, (London, Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press, 1925), pp.137, 254-55; Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur* op cit., p.166.

¹³⁸ McLeod, pp.19-23.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.24; Taher p.43.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.42-43.

¹⁴¹ "Chee Kung Tong. The Hung League in New Zealand," Published report of exhibition, Alexander Turnbull Library, May 10 - June 22, 1991.

First generation Chinese immigrants behaved, as Ng Bickleen Fong describes, as "typical sojourners", that is, those people who spend many years within a country without being assimilated.¹⁴² The male migrant's inability to speak English, at least in its New Zealand patois, hindered his ability to relate to the dominant society. His concerns were limited to the non-social, that is, climate, employment, transportation and housing. Indeed, the immigrant's language, mannerisms, and physical appearance marked him as different, and even though as time passed the tools, clothes and speech of the adopted country was taken on, the relationship at best remained economic or symbiotic, because on a social and cultural level they remained outsiders, the perennial "other". Traditionally male immigrants would return to their home country and marry and there remain until the birth of a child or children, when they would return to New Zealand. It was this single Asian male which was often so alarming to those who saw themselves as upholders of the "moral majority".

This gender balance, helped to create a conception of Asian men as immoral. As the very social organisation of Asian society encouraged women to stay at home so that their husbands would return to their country of origin, those living in New Zealand were mostly single men. The sheer 'maleness' of the alien element indicated instability, as it illustrated an unwillingness to follow the usual patterns of New Zealand immigration. It must also have been unsatisfactory to a government which did not support racial mixing, as the very absence of Asian women appeared to be a moral threat to the nascent status quo. Asians came to New Zealand without many funds and worked so that they could save it to take home. Did they also intend to find female company in New Zealand? To a largely "white" culture which did not appreciate or understand the Asian work ethic the actions of this visible minority must have been puzzling.

¹⁴² Fong, p.11.

Asian women traditionally did not emigrate to join their husbands in foreign countries. However, in the late 1930s many Chinese women arrived in New Zealand because they were forced to leave by war and political chaos in Southern China.¹⁴³ Even at that time they believed that the stay would be temporary. It is not at all surprising to find that in 1936, there were only 511 Chinese women living in New Zealand.¹⁴⁴

Like all immigrants the key to integration appears to be the age of migration and the chance to positively interact with the general public with many school age children fairing better than their parents. Mr W. was born in China, and on arriving in Wellington in the mid 1920s at the age of twenty, he worked in his uncle's fruit shop at a wage of £2 a week in order to pay back his borrowed passage money and poll tax and support his family in China. He did not mind the work, but the treatment he received from white New Zealanders made a significant impact on him;

At the time of the depression, people would want to buy threepence worth of soup vegetables and expected to get everything; if they didn't abuses were not uncommon. Saturday nights were a nightmare that we all dreaded. Larrikins or drunkards would come into the shop for some fun. Shelves of fruit were pulled down which took us ages to put up, and tomatoes and other fruit were thrown at us. Occurrences like that were so common that the police didn't do much about them. Often we were challenged by these larrikins to have a fight. In --'s shop, a Catholic priest used to go there on Saturday nights and sit in the shop to stop people from making trouble. Delivering orders was unenviable job too. In those days, instead of delivering in a truck, we had to carry the case or sack on our shoulder. Sometimes we had to walk a long way up the hill in all weathers. Not infrequently we were pushed over by people who wanted "some fun", our goods scattered in the street amidst a chorus of "Ching Chong Chinaman". It made our blood boil, but we kept our poker face. What else could we do? We were Chinese, we had no political protection and had to earn our living. We all longed for the time when we could go home and live in peace. That hope was the only thing that kept us going at times.¹⁴⁵

While Mr W. was mindful of the discrimination he experienced, Kamla Patel, a more recent migrant from India, noticed the cocooning effect that living

¹⁴³ M. Ip, *Home Away From Home. Life Stories of Chinese women in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1990, p.13.

¹⁴⁴ *Census of New Zealand*, 1936.

¹⁴⁵ Excerpt from Fong, pp.96-96

with other Indians had on her family's adjustment to their New Zealand surroundings;

Some New Zealand people were very sympathetic when they saw I couldn't speak English, and tried to help me as best they could. Other people just completely ignored me, and some of them twitched their nose at me when I tried to ask them something. But learning English wasn't the main thing for me then. I was pregnant and I was thinking about what my baby was going to be like, and about being a good mother and a good wife, and having our own house. I was full of those dreams so I didn't think much about learning English. . . . Two of the other women in the house didn't speak much English either, but one woman spoke it very well. So when any of us had to go to the doctor, or anything like that, she always went with us. That was a big help to me, because it was my first pregnancy, and the checks and examinations that the doctor did were all new. She also helped us with the shopping. We all used to go together, because it was difficult for us, especially buying shoes and clothes...¹⁴⁶

While Kamla's close contact with her countrymen and women helped buffer her against some of the difficulties she might otherwise have faced, initially it also isolated her from the host society, delaying not only her learning of English but also her acceptance into the wider community. As Ng Bickleen argues, the isolationist tendencies of a minority group tend to indicate its exclusion from the majority culture.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, after many years of residency many Asians were able to assume the superficiality of New Zealand culture without losing their own ethnic identity.

However, the social distance between the "white" community and the small pockets of Indians and Chinese living in the country did little to improve empathy between the two groups. The chief motivation of the Asian immigrant - to save the maximum possible money while living as cheaply as possible - was often attacked by New Zealand nationals. For example, the White New Zealand League appealed to a popular, frequently mentioned source of irritation among Europeans, the possible loss of revenue from the economy;

Do you realise that certain of these Orientals live in the greatest frugality, spend nothing, and save all that they may send your own good New Zealand cash to their homelands, that they may retire there and live in affluence on what they have won

¹⁴⁶ A. Jansen, *I have in my arms both ways. Stories by immigrant women*. (Wellington, Allen and Unwin, 1990), pp.10-11.

¹⁴⁷ Fong, pp.26-27.

from our own people? They are worthless as citizens of the Dominion. Probably you have never stopped to think of the thousands and thousands of pounds that annually leave this country. Money that is positively LOST to the Dominion, consequently to its very grave detriment. Are you going to stand for this state of affairs much longer?¹⁴⁸

Until recently both Chinese and Indian immigrants regularly remitted large portions of their income to family overseas, while those who had not intended to stay simply took their earnings and returned to their country of origin. As Chinese were famous for their frugal spending habits, concern in an already faltering economy, was heightened. The relative impermanence of Chinese migratory workers was well recognised (see table 5), and as W. D. Borrie notes, since the beginning of anti-Asiatic propaganda in New Zealand in the 1880s, legislation relating to it has linked the immigration of Asian labour with imminent economic crisis.¹⁴⁹ Most notably, however, this tendency towards temporary, work related migration was not restricted to Chinese. The trend was declining in the interwar period. For while large numbers did make the return trip back to Asia, by the early thirties similar numbers were staying (see table 5).

¹⁴⁸ The White New Zealand League, "Don't Fail to Read this Appeal" Yellow Peril, 23 March 1927. Ironically it was not Asian retribution as claimed which dealt the death blow to this society but rather a lack of funds debilitated its efforts until eventually the Registrar of Incorporated Societies struck it off the record in 1937. For further discussion see J. Leckie, 'In Defence of Race and Empire: The white New Zealand League at Pukekohe,' N. Z. J. H., Vol. 19, no.2, 1985, pp.103-129.

¹⁴⁹ Borrie, p.174.

Table 5: Numbers of Incoming and Outgoing "Race Aliens", 1919-1939

Year	Chinese arrivals	Chinese departures	net increase	Indian arrivals	Indian departures	net increase	§Other arrivals	§Other departures	net increase
1919	418	238	180	193	18	175	97	66	31
1920	1477	380	1097	225	54	171	32	9	23
1921	255	368	-113	137	100	37	249	239	10
1922	345	362	-17	32	125	-93	172	213	-41
1923	365	378	-13	115	66	49	249	188	61
1924	548	451	97	128	128	0	341	332	9
1925	517	524	-7	216	165	51	323	216	107
1926	613	541	72	239	164	75	347	308	391
1927	542	587	-45	151	135	16	270	184	86
1928	419	680	-261	173	140	33	307	284	23
1929	504	531	-27	233	143	9	246	232	14
1930	458	521	-63	191	167	24	265	219	46
1931	375	542	-167	162	157	5	247	255	-8
1932	327	461	-134	117	140	-23	133	142	-9
1933	240	340	-100	81	112	-31	148	150	-2
1934	222	349	-127	107	92	15	152	132	20
1935	273	228	45	130	104	26	140	153	-13
1936	309	218	91	158	109	49	283	256	27
1937	343	218	125	178	111	67	298	258	40
1938	473	265	208	172	171	1	379	317	62
1939	311	160	151	255	199	56	456	330	126

§ The term "other" refers to the total number of people immigrating who were not of European race and colour, whatever their nationality. Their numbers were very small compared to the Indian and Chinese cohorts, and usually were composed of small groups of differing nationalities of "race aliens" from Japan, Asia Minor, or the Pacific Islands.

Source: N. Z. O. Y. 1930-1941.

Asian peoples and employment

In many countries there has been a tendency for race to define economic functions, in such a way as to place a ceiling on an individual's position in the

labour market. In the United States, for example, many early Italian migrants found themselves levered into heavy industry or on the railroad because they were untrained in special skill and were unfamiliar with the language.¹⁵⁰ In a similar way, Asian migrants to New Zealand found themselves engaged in certain occupational niches. Many Chinese and Indians sought to find employment in similar tertiary industries to each other, and often businesses were set up with relatives, or with people from the same villages or districts, partnerships that had been pre-arranged.¹⁵¹

In Chinese culture the family itself was and remains an established economic unit. Most early Chinese migrants had a peasant background based in poultry raising, fishing and fruit and vegetable cultivation. In the nineteenth century most Chinese migrants lived in concentrated numbers in Otago, from there moving to isolated digs in Southland and Westland. However, when eventually gold did decline miners dispersed to the urban and suburban areas and took up occupations which could utilise and complement the family structure, like market gardening, laundry proprietorship and the retail sale of vegetables.¹⁵² For example, between 1916 and 1921 the Dunedin urban area increased its Asian population, and by the 1926 census there were only 17 miners from a total Chinese male population of 3,086. Once the men settled, they usually sent to China for a younger brother or a relative to join them in their industry. Their motivation was neither adventure or the annexation of land, but rather to find economic opportunities. It seems that it was this capacity for hard work that New Zealanders appeared to find objectionable.¹⁵³

Similarly most of the Indians who also migrated at the same time, from the Surat district of South Gujarat and the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts of the Punjab, were peasants involved in similar agricultural activities, as well as

¹⁵⁰ J. Kennedy, p.59.

¹⁵¹ Sedgewick, p.319.

¹⁵² T. G. McGee, "The Indian Community in Wellington City," M. A. (Geography) Victoria University of Wellington. 1961, p.43

¹⁵³ Fong, p.15

textile and handicraft industries.¹⁵⁴ The earliest Indian settlers, those arriving before 1920, became involved in rural development, preferring an inconspicuous role in their new host culture. The Indian community was in the interwar period, and remains today, geographically distributed mainly in the North Island. At the time of the 1921 Census 88.8 percent of the community resided north of Picton. A small community of Sikh dairy farmers operated in the King Country in the period after 1939. According to the 1921 census, a large proportion of the early Indian settlers were involved in wholesale and retail commerce, for example in market gardening, and in agricultural work such as scrub cutting.¹⁵⁵ It should be noted that in order to live in this society, Indians have changed a great deal because of the need to find new markets, and in doing so it has been necessary for them to understand the lifestyles and cultural values of the new society. However, they have maintained things such as their diet and particular social and religious functions, which cannot be seen as a threat to their new society.

As the country developed from a colony to a Dominion, more emphasis and thought was given to the implications of "being British". By extension, the best way to distinguish British people in an Anglo-based population like New Zealand's, was to separate those who were not. While this may initially have seemed to be a simple exercise of separating the "coloured" faces from the "white", the issue became more complicated when representatives from Britain's "coloured" empire began to request equal rights and privileges. From the late nineteenth century through to the mid 1920s New Zealand legislators responded to concerns from workers about Asian migration and involvement in New Zealand by arguments that there should be economic controls. Yet all too often interest groups such as the R. S. A. and the White New Zealand

¹⁵⁴ McGee, p.42.

¹⁵⁵ The census recorded that 21.7 percent of male Indians were involved in agricultural pursuits, forestry and hunting, while 33 percent were gainfully employed in wholesale and retail commerce, Insurance and banking.

League fell back upon racist arguments that had marked the nineteenth century. Racial and eugenic arguments supporting the position of "yellow" peoples in the human hierarchy lent themselves towards the limiting of Asian contact with white New Zealanders. To a certain extent Asians followed this lead, as economic priorities and the marginalisation of Asians in employment caused them to seek out countrymen and minimised their contact with the wider community.

A policy of restricted Alien migration: 1926-1939.

As table 5 shows, from 1926 immigration by Asians was strictly regulated as a result of calls by interest groups. In terms of numbers, however, the entire decade from 1920 to 1930 shows a decline for arrivals over departures of Chinese, and in the Indian community the equivalent figures extended from an increase of 90 people in 1929 to a loss of 93 people in 1922.¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, there is evidence of some fundamental changes to the Chinese and Indian minorities in the restrictive decade between 1926 and 1936. In the Chinese New Zealand community the population of permanent residents dropped from 3,374 to 2,899 ten years later. But in that period the number of Chinese identifying themselves with the Christian religion increased slightly, from 21.66 percent, to 22.14 percent. More significantly, numbers of those identifying with the Confucian faith had decreased from an overwhelming 61.18 percent in 1921, to 38.52 percent in 1926, and then to 30.19 percent in 1936.¹⁵⁷ By comparison, Indians living in New Zealand who identified with the Hindu religion fluctuated from 55.28 percent in 1921 to 34.08 percent six years later. Of

¹⁵⁶ LE 1 1931/105 (183) Chinese and Indians arrived in New Zealand 1921-1931. National Archives.

¹⁵⁷ See Race Aliens section of 1921, 1926 and 1936 Census.

statistics taken from Indian permanent residents in 1936, 47.36 percent considered themselves to be Hindu.¹⁵⁸

The advent of the Labour Government brought changes in the status of Indians and Chinese in New Zealand, although it should be noted that it was also reluctant to loosen immigration laws. Labour's policy was one of planned immigration where all migrants were carefully chosen to fill identified places. Special concessions for Asians, particularly refugees, were considered to be exceptional and humanitarian measures rather than changes in immigration policy.¹⁵⁹ In 1936 the Labour government allowed 500 Chinese husbands and fathers to pay a £200 returnable bond in return for the granting of temporary visas to their wives and children.¹⁶⁰ While the two year visa was available only to permanent residents, it was renewable. Furthermore, for the first time the old-age pension was made payable to Asians in 1936, and in 1938 benefits such as sickness pay, free medication and the unemployment benefit were also made available to them.

In 1938 the government still required Asian visitors to possess permits in order to travel to New Zealand or the Mandated Territory of Western Samoa, although in the case of representatives of the Chinese Government or people who were "pre-eminent in political, religious, scientific or similar spheres" they were prepared to waive the need for a permit provided that the Consul-General was found to be satisfied as to the "bona fides of the applicant."¹⁶¹ The High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Wellington was to later admit in official correspondence that Chinese applications for permits were declined as a "matter of administrative practise."¹⁶² The one modification on behalf of

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Interview between Dr. Harrop, British Secretary of Labour and H. T. Armstrong, Minister of Labour, 21 July 1937, L1, 22/1/3, Bundle 224. Suggestions re: state aided migration, 1936-46. Parts 1-2, National Archives; Despatch from the High Commissioner in New Zealand to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 21 February 1940 in A. J. C. P., 5416:695, in M344 ##

¹⁶⁰ See table 5.

¹⁶¹ Governor - General Lord Galway to Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary for Dominion Affairs, 19 April 1938 in A.J.C.P.5468:816, P137/9, Immigration regulations of the Dominions.

¹⁶² Batterbee to Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, A.J.C.P.5416:694, M.334,

the New Zealand government towards important visitors was most likely due to a number of formal complaints made by Indian tourists to their own government and referred to the Dominions Office in London, regarding the compulsory deposit of £10 required under the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920, and a number of incidents of temporary passport confiscation by New Zealand Immigration Officials.¹⁶³ To some extent the British Government maintained some influence over New Zealand's policy, for in August 1939 the Under-Secretary of State for New Zealand requested that Indian visitors be exempted from the £10 deposit.¹⁶⁴ In April of the next year, it was reported that the matter was "receiving attention."

The international ramifications of the poll tax were also a matter for discussion, but again the matter took some time to resolve. F. A. Ponton argues that Cabinet decided not to admit any further Chinese in 1926 but decided against abolishing the tax until the introduction of consolidating legislation into Parliament.¹⁶⁵ In fact while it was not actually abolished until 1944, from 1934 the levy was waived each time by the Governor-General.¹⁶⁶ While the abolition of the tax had been a topic for discussion under Coates' Reform government, the government was to change four times again before the law was actually altered.

The strict control of the permit system appears to have been relative in the circumstances. Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage commented in June 1937 that when New Zealand again opened their doors to immigration they wanted to open it to 'their own kith and kin', with the implication that Asian migration would not be loosened greatly in this event.¹⁶⁷ Despite the lack of a

New Zealand: United Kingdom assisted passage scheme. General.

¹⁶³ A.J.C.P.5416:694, Folders M327/2 - M327/5, New Zealand Immigration Acts and regulations: restrictions on entry of Asian Indians.

¹⁶⁴ Letter to Under Secretary of State for New Zealand from the Secretary, Public and Judicial Department of India Office, 17 August 1939, in A.J.C.P.5416:694, M327/2 New Zealand Immigration Acts and regulations: restrictions on entry of Asian Indians.

¹⁶⁵ Ponton, pp.69-71.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.70.

¹⁶⁷ Discussion between M. J. Savage and members of the Overseas Settlement Board, 17 June

immigration policy, Mr Armstrong, the Minister for Immigration was able to comment in 1938 on its intentions;

The Government are planning for the future, and they believe that the best population New Zealand could get would be those drawn from British stock - this is not saying anything detrimental to other countries - we are English-speaking people and we get on very much better with our own.¹⁶⁸

When Japan invaded Southern China in 1939, the Government allowed the immigration of a certain number of 'refugee' wives and children of naturalised and New Zealand-born Chinese, and the temporary admission of Chinese students.¹⁶⁹ This decision can be viewed as fulfilling a social function rather than a move on the immigration agenda, as on 25 August 1939 a motion was passed accelerating the rate of admission of suitable refugees and migrants on humanitarian grounds.¹⁷⁰

In retrospect cultural interaction to 1939 can, from its late start, be seen as relatively isolated. Assimilation involves contact between individuals or groups of people from differing racial backgrounds or racial heritages which causes or precedes some shift or modification in either or both, of the individuals or groups. Anti-Asian laws, and a concurrent atmosphere of intolerance, served to segregate and isolate. The pressure on Asians to blend into New Zealand was in the twenties and thirties, and remains today, very oppressive, dominating economic and social interaction.

From the opposite viewpoint the early Chinese and Indian communities in New Zealand were preoccupied with the prospect of one day returning home, while the very nature of their initial numbers, that is the sexual imbalance, indicated an unwillingness to have a permanent impact on New Zealand

1937, 32nd meeting, A. J. C. P.4506:666, M.2/10, Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes to High Commissioners.

¹⁶⁸ Mr Armstrong, in notes of a deputation to the Prime Minister, 21 February 1938 in L1, 22/1/4, Dominion Settlement Association, 1936-55, National Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Discussion between M. J. Savage and members of the Overseas Settlement Board, 17 June 1937.

¹⁷⁰ See comments by R. Pernice and J. Brook "Relationship of Migrant Status (Refugee or Immigrant) to Mental Health," *The International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, Vol. 40 (30) p.177; *N.Z.P.D.*, Vol.225, August 25, 1939, pp.585-598.

society. For example, in 1921 only 10 percent of the New Zealand Chinese community were born in New Zealand.¹⁷¹ Yet in reality Asian numbers in New Zealand were small. The fruit shop or laundry was most likely to be the only contact an adult had with Asian cultures in New Zealand, and even this contact was not tolerated by some white citizens.¹⁷² For those Asian peoples already here, the choice was either to blend in, or find a way in which to participate in certain spheres of Pakeha society while maintaining a cultural separateness. It is this choice which placed money and a better life for family in New Zealand above cultural status.

Europeans also brought cultural baggage to the relationship with "non-white" immigrants. Arguably, it was the singular ability to distinguish Asians from Europeans that served to not only demarcate good and evil, Christian and Heathen, white and yellow, cleanliness and disease, but also created an "us" and "them" dichotomy; the very need to fight against these hordes was enough to create unity amongst those who felt they had a God-given right to call New Zealand home. Once resident in New Zealand "the Other" gained new significance; Asians living in this country came up against prejudice, based not necessarily on the basis of skin colour, but on a national stereotype. Asians were seen as uneducated, poor and undeveloped and their lack of understanding of "white" society and the English language was evidence of ignorance. To combat this, the Indian community united and formed a representative body with which to assist the common welfare of Indians in New Zealand, and the Chinese community acted similarly.

All the measures taken by the government and the interest groups against Asian migration in the 1920s reflect either or both of two sides; an antipathy towards aliens, or a concern that alien actions should not upset the white standard of living. The community as a whole was stubbornly monocultural

¹⁷¹ Taher, p.41.

¹⁷² Mr Magnus Badger at the Wellington Returned Servicemen's Association Meeting, *The Press*, 3 September 1920, p.6.

and ethnocentric, and legislation of this period reflected that attitude, with restrictive immigration laws being formed to face a perceived economic threat. The change to a Labour government in 1935 heralded some incremental changes, but as the immigration portfolio had in general been shelved it is unsurprising that allowances were made only on humanitarian grounds. In this there is a certain irony. While the Labour movement had been one of the major voices against Chinese immigration because of its threat to employment, the Labour government proved to be "a true friend of the Chinese in this country."¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Murphy, p.52.

Conclusion

The framework provided by British immigration policy in the nineteenth and early twentieth century provided a strong foundation for New Zealand nationhood. Historically all the colonies shared with Britain a political and cultural tradition. After Australian federation at the turn the century, New Zealand was legally disassociated from a large group of British colonies, the Commonwealth of Australia, and became a relative outsider interacting with a large neighbour. New Zealand's own cultural identity was delineated as British colonial, but "not Australian".¹ Yet, the unity provided by an imported administration and peoples produced a majority population which, after the first World War, was beginning to see itself as a nation. In 1941 commentator F. L. W. Wood argued that New Zealand possessed

a new sense of nationhood, based on the consciousness of a great national effort, and fortified by the solid internal prosperity arising from war prices. The sudden maturity of national consciousness, together with frank recognition of the help given to Britain by her Dominions led to a revolution in Dominion status.²

However, to assume that New Zealand's nationhood had enjoyed such a "sudden maturity" is to both overestimate the changes within society and the impact of external factors on it. World-wide experience has shown that New Zealand possessed an unusual colonial situation in which the population balance favoured Europeans, chiefly former inhabitants of the British Isles or their descendents. The tradition of British intervention included not only economic and parliamentary assistance, but also the transfer of peoples. Within this context, the New Zealand began to create a formula for favouring the most "suitable" intending immigrants.

¹ K. Sinclair, "Why New Zealanders Are Not Australians. New Zealand and the Australian Federal movement, 1881-1901," in K. Sinclair (ed) Tasman Relations. New Zealand and Australia, 1788-1988, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1987); Hawke, G. "Australian and New Zealand Economic Development from about 1890 to 1940," in *ibid.*, p.114.

² F.L.W. Wood, New Zealand in the World, (Wellington, Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), p.96.

The resulting immigration policy was deliberate. In the 1920s, rural interests were prioritised, with comparatively large numbers of British people destined for employment in New Zealand's rural sector. Farm workers, miners and domestics were the ideal immigrants. However as the economic climate changed, so did policy. From 1931, there were theoretically stronger controls on the selection process which considered even British immigration with careful discrimination, as the Government focused on economic recovery. Controls on immigration focused on easy absorption, low costs, and on securing entrenched local interests in the labour market. Immigrants in the 1930s were viewed as an addition to the job-seeking workforce rather than to the overall capacity of the economy, and correspondingly New Zealand governments in the 1930s were unwilling to commit themselves to any assisted immigration programmes, preferring to meet short-term labour needs, particularly in the urban areas. Primarily, the decision to bring out immigrants in this period was based on labour requirements; immigration policy proper was a non-issue. Why, one might ask, had it changed?

Ultimately, the policy of promoting British migration was not as smooth or as ideal as was envisioned, for several reasons. Firstly, the nomination system did not work as well as had been hoped. During the late 1920s the government encountered instances where nominators had been unable to fulfil their guarantee of employment, thus leaving the government in a difficult position.³ Similarly, as far as 'farm boys' were concerned the Labour government of the late 1930s came to hold the view that while farmers had claimed there was a shortage, their labour had not really been required.⁴

Furthermore, traditional New Zealand immigration policy had considered population needs only in terms of yeoman farming, that is, of small pockets of

³ Discussion between M. J. Savage and members of the Overseas Settlement Board, 17 June 1937, 32nd meeting in A.J.C.P.5406:666. M2/10 Overseas Settlement Board: circulation of minutes.

⁴ Ibid.

people situated on large tracts of land. By contrast the interwar British government were concerned with migration as a tool for strengthening Empire, and therefore with the transportation of large numbers. This conflict was central to the immigration and the population debate of the early thirties, and disturbed the usual accord shared between British and New Zealand governments. As regards the resettlement of the returned soldiers of World War One in particular, the New Zealand government was firm in replying to Imperial pressure, as land settlement had become a very sensitive issue. New Zealand authorities reverted to the age old belief in the need for a relatively small number of migrants rather than land settlement on the scale of Western Europe, and having recognised the Dominions as nations capable of making their own domestic policy, British was forced to acquiesce to this position.

The fundamental problem relating to the assisted immigration programme was the incumbent belief structure in which all British immigration was encompassed. While assisted immigration schemes recommended pre-training for intending migrants, and specified age, sex and occupation biases, there was a general perception of British migrants in general as being more "suitable" than any other nationality or race. In terms of legislation and religion this was true, as British immigrants already had Christianity and appreciated the moral duty inherent in British citizenship. Yet also encompassing this, was the belief that immigrants from home would possess the same physical stamina, the same labour attitudes, and the same beliefs and mores. Children in particular were ideal migrants; young, adaptable, cheap and guaranteed labour. However Britain was in fact more ethnically different than "myths of homogeneity" would allow and the differences endured despite official attempts to select certain types.⁵ As has also been noted in the Australian experience by Paul Bartrop, the shift in awareness of racial distinctions provided a new set of criteria for judging immigrants and classifications for entry became more

⁵ Belich, p.318.

specific.⁶ In the same way, the New Zealand government became more critical of the types of immigrants arriving and more interested in curtailing the wholesale entry of British immigrants, and New Zealand citizens became more interested in the abilities of "Homies" to assimilate.

While technically British migrants were simply British subjects who had passed from one British dominion to another, and therefore were still 'at home', the lack of recourse for migrants in New Zealand was in itself a problem. The decision taken to travel to New Zealand before 1939 could not be taken lightly, nor could the restraints, both social and financial, on the possibility of return. Migrants had a vested interest in settling as comfortably as possible within their new environment. Those that did not, wrote bitterly to family and friends at home, and were probably responsible for educating the more worldly and much less numerous migrants who attempted the move in the later 1930s.

The particular decline in popularity of domestic service over the interwar period served to highlight the increasing number of women choosing to work outside of traditional spheres. Furthermore the continuing demand for domestics maintained by powerful interest groups and supported by the New Zealand government until the late 30s is indicative of the role of New Zealand women as citizens. While female suffrage had been granted in 1893, the marginal participation of women in civil society and the priorities of state action regarding male employment, attest to a lack of consideration of the needs of young female workers, and suggests a degree of resistance to the male stereotype, the masculinity of New Zealand nationalism.

One of the more distinctive features of the New Zealand lifestyle was the need for a certain amount of ingenuity and self-sufficiency, and the assumption that the harsh work of pioneering would cast the spirit of the young British

⁶ Bartrop, P. R. "Indifference and Inconvenience: Australian government policy towards refugees from Nazi persecution, 1933-39," Ph. D (Economic History), Monash University, 1989, p.12.

country has been acknowledged since the nineteenth century.⁷ Distances between cities with limited road access, and the isolation of most rural communities guaranteed it as a pre-existing condition of New Zealand living. The geographic isolation of the rural lifestyle meant that most people needed to be self-sufficient for necessities like accommodation and food; it effected the range of goods farms needed to produce and the variety needed for barter and exchanges.⁸ As such the family was the unit of labour, utilising not only the skills of both parents and the extended family, but also the labour of children. Many people lived under pioneering conditions even though New Zealand's state of industrialisation was well advanced. Very few immigrants intended for rural work actually stayed on the land, and many of the women domestics moved on to other work. In fact Empire settlement accelerated the urban drift in New Zealand and other Dominion cities.⁹

Importantly then, the "colonial challenge" was an integral part of the migrant's progress. The test was a class issue relating the working class migrant's ability to adjust to the different social requirements of the New Zealand labouring class. Adult male farm workers and school boy immigrants noticed the lack of support provided by their new farming environment, a situation which, it seemed, embodied the "colonial challenge". The ability to understand the value of labour was considered a triumph of the evolution of Dominionhood, and independence in the pursuit of labour was eminently suitable. In the same way that the New Zealand nation relished the chance to demonstrate its independence, the celebration of self-sufficiency marked the respectable New Zealand citizen from the working-class British immigrant.

By the mid 1920s the fallacy of making general assumptions about suitability with regard to a national group was becoming evident. In terms of labour, residents began to consider "new chums" (Or Homies) as raw material

⁷ Sinclair, *The Native Born*, p.1.

⁸ Toynbee, p.28

⁹ Drummond, p.143.

in need of shaping. The "New chum's" lack of versatility, her (or his) reputation for complaining, and expectations of self-improvement, distinguished each one. The problem was not one dimensional. New Zealand citizens had developed a sentimental picture of the British way of life. The dissatisfaction at suitability was more indicative of the developing social difference within New Zealand society than any real decline in British selection or the moral fibre of candidates. The interwar period had seen a number of social changes. The development of protective legislation for young people in particular, was effective in making youthful immigrant labour neither cheap nor easy to obtain. Similarly the creation of minimum wages caused dairy farmers to desist in requesting migrant services. While religious consistency was a sustaining and re-orienting characteristic, the potential for non-conformity was recognised both within the community and by legislators. Government recognised the potential for urban and rural unrest and worked hard to prevent the entry of those who might adopt a critical position towards the existing New Zealand social constraints.

Fundamentally there was no allowance for the possibility of cultural differences, or for the need of a support group for young migrants accustomed to wildly different cultural and class situations. None of these factors were considered if a migrant was unable to settle into his or her new life, but was simply seen as a failure in the selection process. Within onset of economic depression, the matter became academic, because the assisted immigration programme was never again to occur on such a scale. Mass British migration was thereafter the subject of intergovernmental discussions, and public discussion only.

Retrospectively then, one can see a gradual change in attitudes towards British migrants and migration from Britain in general. It was not so much that the British had become less suitable, but that the settlers of the Dominion had different expectations. Economic constraints, combined by closer reflection on

the actual consequences of recent immigration policy made policy-makers more conservative and the bulk of the electorate more critical. Those who were interested in promoting British migration in the late thirties had vested interest in migration and realised that British migrants still had more cache than other migrants. They were the entrenched capitalists of the system - the employers, the industrialists and the farmers - and they cited the declining birth-rate as evidence of a desperate need for a larger population. Those interested in alien migration, particularly the giving of asylum to refugees, were usually humanitarian organisations and Jewish societies who urged the government for a more liberal immigration policy.

Because Britons made up such a large proportion of the population, and British heritage, cultural practises, religion and governmental structure were an inherent part of New Zealand society, immigrants were distinguished as being British or non-British (alien) and were subject to a number of prejudicial generalisations. This factor did not change in the interwar period, as such institutionalised racism usefully interacted with ethnocentrism and nationalism. For example, public anger at "race alien" immigration was disproportionate to the numbers involved and was particularly virulent at times of high unemployment.

To a certain extent there is also some evidence of there being a special set of criteria for aliens. It has been suggested that refugees hoping to immigrate had more likelihood of gaining entry permits if they had money and qualifications. Such incidents served only to differentiate the British experience, and to further dehumanise aliens as "the Other."

In differentiating non-British from British, the numerous insecurities of the New Zealand people were articulated. Like other colonial societies of this period there was a notable imbalance in the age-sex structure of New Zealand population, and like other Western societies the average age of marriage in New Zealand has been relatively late, and certainly not universal, a concerning

notion within the discourse of the "British family" and the moral hierarchy of races. In the early days of settlement the ratio of women to men was very low and single women were very much sought after by farmers and other men whose livelihood depended for viability on the family as an economic unit. Quite simply, it was considered that Britain had too many women and the colonies had too many men. There was little wonder that the paternalism of Britain extended into eugenics as concerned Britons around the Empire questioned the makeup of future generations in the colonies without more British migration. The pioneers of the dominions might impregnate lower breeds like "coloured: women or continentals, and the result would be less "British". Aside from discouraging "miscegenation", a term used to describe relationships between Caucasians, Asians or Negroid peoples, which resulted in the birth of children, the best means of avoiding this was to encourage British migration. In the same way that British families were themselves ideal immigrants, the Empire itself was a family. In New Zealand immigration supporters welcomed young immigrants as "sons of Empire."

By contrast, alien immigrants, as representatives of their respective nations, exemplified the distrust New Zealand felt of the world at large. Only aliens had the potential to become enemies on the grounds of their nationality, and within New Zealand society there existed a concern that aliens would return to their country of origin taking the accumulated wealth earned in New Zealand. Asians also were perceived both as disease-bearing and highly populous in their immigration. Politicians felt they had a mandate to keep the country "pure and loyal".

At the start of the interwar period then, there was a general belief among the Dominion's British citizens that British labour was desirable, non-British was not. There was a blurring of this definition from the late 1920s when all extra workers were to be discouraged from immigrating so as to limit the effect of the initial economic crises. Ordinary New Zealanders feared that

immigration would not only increase competition, it would endanger the standard of living, and delay the re-employment of the unemployed. In particular, blue collar workers, and the medical professions wanted employment protection. A conception also existed that non-voluntary immigration schemes were more expensive to the country than the voluntary self-funded migration of individuals and small groups. It was believed to increase unemployment, and cause the immigration of "unsuitable" people. As contemporary writer J. C. Beaglehole has argued on the matter of unemployment;

In the history of New Zealand, indeed, since 1930, no study is longer, none more entangled, and none more uniformly depressing than that of the attempts to deal effectively with a problem the limits of which seem more elastic than the intelligence or the will of the man.¹⁰

The decision to base immigration policy on the importation of unskilled and semiskilled workers from 1927 is evidence of a pre-existing agenda based on economic restraints. A priority had been given in the early 1920s to importing unskilled British workers like private household workers and labourers to fill mainly rural vacancies in the lower strata of New Zealand society. Emphasis was also placed on recruiting young British migrants, boys from the mid to late teens, to work on farms. Yet from the late 1930s the emphasis was also placed on finding British semiskilled workers to work in manufacturing industries, as the influence of the rural sector declined. Both occupational groups used skills which were learned within a relatively short period of time and were defined by the employer. They were jobs which were non-threatening to the existing population, and therefore caused little public comment. The acceptance of other occupational levels and racial groups proved more problematic. In the later 1930s the Medical profession in particular urged the government to restrict the arrival of doctors and dentists

¹⁰ J. C. Beaglehole, New Zealand: A Short History, (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1936), pp.91-92.

from Europe. There was also a racial component to economic functions in New Zealand, as different racial groups found themselves confined to specific labour niches. Rigid labour and social welfare legislation served to keep them there.

The key to ensuring the seamless entry of differing groups into New Zealand society appeared to be their ability to dissolve into the existing environment. Social status, a position earned and evaluated by participation in community affairs and in the performance of adult gender roles, denoted acceptance within the community.¹¹ In New Zealand smaller social groupings and restricted resources entailed the need for closer interactions and created many working relationships.¹² Importantly however, a failure to conform to these conditions implied, in immigrants, an inability to "assimilate," and was found to be particular to those whose natural cultural, racial or religious affiliations or language barriers meant that they were more comfortable associating within a small, like-minded group. New Zealand's established "white" population had not envisioned British migrants to fall into this category, but in practise this was often the case.

The situation was not one of the immigrant's own creation. While arguably nationalism legitimises a political unit, it is also an artificial construct created if and when a group of people recognise amongst themselves a mutual right and duty to each other in view of their shared membership of the group.¹³ In the same way, the legislation of the inter-war period supported the artificial discourse of race and nationality in the interests of nationalism. Laws differentiating by race supported long-standing beliefs that "non-whites" were opposite to their paler skinned contemporaries, and such prejudices were easy to support when the contact with small groups was infrequent. "

"Non-white" peoples were clearly "unsuitable", but this delineation on grounds of national or ethnic prejudice could be problematic, especially as

¹¹ Toynbee, p.30.

¹² Ibid., p.29.

¹³ Gellner, E. Nations and Nationalism, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1983), p.7

"suitability" was a flexible factor, particularly with regard to western European nations. Germans for example had been considered suitable before World War I. Likewise the position of refugees, who, while defined under immigration regulation as aliens, created a precedent for a more humanitarian approach. Even more problematic was the situation posed by those Asian peoples who were also British citizens. To a certain extent this resolved itself, for the Empire could not sanction exclusion on the grounds of "colour", exclusion could be justified in New Zealand with regard to economic protection.

The turning point for New Zealand nationalism with regard to immigration came with the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1931. This particular piece of legislation gave the government the power to prohibit individuals as it saw fit, a move which gave the Minister of Immigration to personally determine suitability, case by case. The legislation also provided the Immigration Department with the opportunity to support the continuation of an ethnocentric society. In many respects, an individual's right to cultural and ethnic autonomy irrespective of the dominant culture is not maintained to this day. Dr Lochore, writing in 1951, framed his views of outsider behaviour as a duty to conform;

We cannot import the minority problems of Europe. If we admit European aliens, it is on the tacit understanding (and an explicit understanding would be preferable) that they are prepared to make such concessions in language and customs as are necessary if they are to blend with our predominantly British community. If they are unwilling to make that sacrifice, let them go elsewhere.¹⁴

This statement vocalises the perception of New Zealand citizenship as some kind of moral duty - a perception with a British history which appears to survive within the New Zealand context. Yet acculturation is not a one-sided process. Like other social processes, contact between two parties alters them both somewhat and as a result both sides borrow certain elements. As has been discussed, New Zealand citizens were but a "partial reflection" of their British

¹⁴ Lochore, p.26.

heritage, a factor caused not only by the situation of their colonial condition, but by the melding of differing peoples. Ironically, aliens met several of the criteria for "suitability". The very industrious and independence noted in "race aliens" was the major characteristic missing in more "suitable" British migrants. Furthermore aliens were cost effective, all having financed their own passage, and non being eligible for any kind of State support until the end of the inter-war period.

By the end of the thirties immigration practise and policy had served to weaken the "Britishness" of New Zealand citizens. New Zealanders were distinct, not only from Australians but also from Britons in general. In weakening this association, the juxtaposition of "aliens" as the other was changed, although not decreased. On occasions the 1935 Labour government recognised the need to waiver the permit restriction for special circumstance. The Other was now primarily "non-white" peoples as Western Europeans in general were perceived as suitable. In a sense then, the very differentiation served to strengthen the national ethos. While Empire uniformity was the objective, New Zealand policy-makers created their own legislation covering alien status. Similarly, while New Zealand citizens identified with their British roots beyond all others, most also celebrated, or at least noticed, their own differences.

The more independent international policy is reflected somewhat in the more inward focus of national decision-making from the mid 1930s. In response to British pressure to restart immigration schemes, and to have a quota system for refugees the New Zealand government agreed in principle but declined to commit itself to anything other than small measures. Policy became more controlled and more selective, with its objectives appearing to fall into two main categories; that is those which served particular national interests, for example providing labour for economic and industrial development, and those which had humanistic value, like the acceptance of

refugees and the reunification of families.¹⁵ The main feature of New Zealand's immigration policy, if not also that of many national immigration policies, was a certain "rigidity."¹⁶

Ironically, the real losers in the immigration debate have been Maori, for, having embraced the colonisers, they found themselves an underclass in their own country. "White" New Zealand has a long history of legislative policy and administrative practise in which the childlike qualities of its indigenous peoples, and their need for guardianship, were emphasised. Maori were seen as in need of protection from sexual predators, land predators and from their own inability to guard against the moral predators; prostitution, strong drink, promiscuity, heathenism, gambling and firearms. Rather than being presented as a reason to encourage the immigration and integration of other races, the protection and careful "assimilation" of Maori was seen as a reason for caution. In turn, the inability to "assimilate" Maori, as well as "race aliens", has caused the marginalisation of many. To the present day, Maori unemployment figures are considerably higher than their Pakeha counterparts.¹⁷

¹⁵ R. Pernice, and J. Brook, "Relationship of Migrant Status (Refugee or Immigrant) to Mental Health", The International Journal of Social Psychiatry (1994), Vol. 40, No. 3, p.177.

¹⁶ Ponton, p.102.

¹⁷ The Treaty of Waitangi and Immigration Policy, p.5.

APPENDIX 1: Biographical information form.**INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION FORM**

NAME:

HOURS RECORDED:

ADDRESS:

DATES RECORDED:

PHONE:

BORN:

AT:

MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS NAMES:

OCCUPATION:

TOWN\CITY\COUNTRY:

PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS NAMES:

OCCUPATION:

TOWN\CITY\COUNTRY:

FATHER'S NAME:

DOB:

DOD:

OCCUPATION:

DATE AND PLACE OF IMMIGRATION:

SHIP:

MOTHER'S NAME:

DOB:

DOD:

OCCUPATION:

DATE AND PLACE OF IMMIGRATION:

SHIP:

POLITICS/RELIGION:

POINTS OF INTEREST:

APPENDIX 2: Questions asked of correspondents.

- From which country did your family emigrate, and for what reasons did they leave that country? What nationality did your parents identify themselves as? (Had your immediate family always lived in that country?)
- Did your family go to church in the old country? Did they attend church when they came to New Zealand? Was it the same denomination?
- Did they come - to the best of your knowledge - under any assisted immigration scheme? How long did it take them to have their application approved? Did they have to pay passage money, and if so how much was it?
- What memories do you have of your trip? Was there anyone looking after you?
- What were your parents' occupations previously? How did they find work here?
- At which port did your ship disembark? Where did your family settle? How old were you at the time?
- What were your family's experiences of the New Zealand people, and of their new environment? Did it meet their expectations?
- How did you feel about living in New Zealand?
- What contact did your family have with family in the old country?

APPENDIX 3: APPLICATION OF THE EMPIRE SETTLEMENT ACT, 1922.

(Overseas Settlement Department (Dominions Office) Handbook on the Dominion of New Zealand, pp.13-15.)

(a) Assisted Passages

All persons granted assisted passages are required to undertake to remain permanently in New Zealand, and, in the event of their wishing to leave the Dominion within 5 years of the date of arrival, they are liable to be called upon to refund the difference between the cost of the assisted passage and the ordinary full fare.

All applicants must be of British birth. Persons are not deemed to be of British birth if of aboriginal races of any British possession or protectorate. Persons of alien birth, even though naturalized, are not eligible. Married men desirous of proceeding ahead of their families cannot be assisted.

(b) Nominated Passages

Assisted passages can be obtained by persons able to arrange for friends, relatives or prospective employers resident in New Zealand, to nominate them, with the Department of Immigration, Wellington, under the following conditions:-

1. They must not have attained the age of 50 years.
2. They must supply to the High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, satisfactory medical certificate and certificates of character.
3. In the case of married applicants, nomination must include husband, wife, and family (if any), except where a judicial separation exists or desertion is proved.
4. The nominator must undertake to make provision for housing accommodation and employment for the nominees on arrival in the Dominion, and must also guarantee that they will take up permanent residence in the Dominion.
5. Only such persons are accepted as are, in the opinion of the High Commissioner, suitable in all respects, and his decision is final.
6. Provided that the above conditions are complied with, the rates payable by approved applicants are as follows (subject to revision should occasion arise) :-

Boys under 19 years of age....	Free passage
Girls and women under 40 years of age (single and widows without children)	Free passage
Single women and widows without children, between the ages of 40 and 50....	£11 0s.
Single men between 19 and 50 years of age....	£11 0s.
Married men and women under 50 years of age (including widowers and widows with children)	£11 0s. each
Domestic servants....	Free passage and £2 pocket money

(c) Selected Immigrants. (Farm Workers, &c.)

Assisted passages are sometimes available, without nomination, for special classes of workers who may be particularly required. These passages are only applicable to such occupations as are from time to time specified by the New Zealand Government. Special application should be made to any Employment Exchange or Branch Employment Office of the Ministry of Labour in order to ascertain whether passages are available or not at any particular time.

Fully qualified farm labourers (single, between the ages of 17 and 45) can usually be accepted without nomination. Single cabinet makers, carpenters, joiners, plumbers and electricians can also sometimes be considered without nomination. In the case of plumbers and electricians, applicants must possess the certificate of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

(d) Free Passages For Women Domestic Servants

Free passages may be granted to women domestic servants if approved by the High Commissioner for New Zealand -(1) Provided that they are *bona fide* domestics and are employed as such at the time of application, and give a written undertaking to follow that calling for at least 12 months after arrival in the Dominion, and (2) provided that they have not attained the age of 40 years but have attained the age of 18 years. In special cases, applications may be considered from women who have been continuously employed in domestic service at home. Applicants should be prepared to undertake general domestic duty and not limit themselves to one branch of service only.

In addition to the free passage a gratuity of £2 will be paid.

A Matron appointed by the New Zealand Government travels on each steamer in charge of the domestic servants proceeding under the free passage scheme, and on arrival they are met by the Immigration Department Officers, by whom employment is found for them.

(e) Boys For Farm Work

Public School Boys Scheme.- Boys between 17 and 20, who have been educated at a Public or Secondary School and are desirous of being trained as farmers can, under certain conditions, be granted assisted passages without nominations.

Church of England Boys Scheme.- The Church of England authorities in New Zealand arrange situations on farms for boys between the ages of 15 and 19 (preferably boys with secondary school educations) who are selected by the Church of England Council of Empire Settlement, 39 Victoria Street. London, S.W.1. Such boys, if approved by the High Commissioner, receive free passages and proceed in parties under the care of a conductor appointed by the Church of England Council of Empire Settlement.

The New Zealand Sheep-owners' Debt to British Seamen Fund.- This scheme relates to boys and girls whose fathers, being British seamen, were killed or suffered disablement during the war. The children are sent to New Zealand free of all cost, where the boys are given agricultural training under careful supervision before being placed out with suitable farmers at approved wages. The girls are given a six months' training in domestic work, milking, poultry, bee keeping, &c., after which they are placed with approved farmers' wives at current wages.

Salvation Army Boys Scheme.- Boys not eligible under the schemes mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs may apply to the Secretary for Migration, The Salvation Army, Migration House, 3 Upper Thames Street, London, E.C.3, for inclusion in parties of boys sent to New Zealand from time to time.

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